

April 20 1996

Friday May 3 1996

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Greece G 2.50	Norway NK 15	Zimbabwe Z\$ 7.00

The Guardian INTERNATIONAL

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
46,543

With Europe's weather

The return of the world's most reclusive director

Battle of the best-sellers

Review

Searching for Stanley Kubrick



Archer v Grisham

Guide to the summer music festivals

Plus: pick of the Proms

Books page 10

Farmers angry, but burger chain buys British again Rage at beef muddle

Owen Bowcott and Rebecca Smithers

THE fast food chain Wimpy, which joined the stampede from British beef earlier this year, yesterday put home-grown burgers back on its menus amid signs that consumer confidence may be recovering from the BSE and CJD scare.

But the first piece of good news for the Government in the six-week crisis, keenly welcomed by John Major, coincided with a fierce row in the Commons over the implementation of the scheme to slaughter cattle over 30 months old.

The scheme was intended to boost consumer confidence in domestic beef by speeding up the eradication of BSE. But farmers complained they had not been told where they could dispose of the cattle, while abattoirs said they were uncertain which had been designated to take part in the subsidised cull.

The National Farmers Union warned that there was growing frustration. "We would like to see the scheme up and running as soon as possible," a spokesman said. "But there is still some confusion about when the scheme is going to start."

One of those affected, David Smart, a cattle farmer from Newark, commented yesterday: "It's building up to a monumental mess. Nobody knows who will be picking the cattle up and who will be rendering them."

At Westminster, the Labour leader, Tony Blair, branded the first day of the slaughter scheme as "pretty inept" and demanded a full explanation for the "confusion all around the country".

But the Prime Minister, insisting that farmers who had not yet received information would have it "very speedily", attempted to concentrate on the good news. "I am delighted to see that the Wimpy chain have lifted the ban on British beef with immediate effect," he told cheering Tory MPs.

With the number of cattle sold at market this week only 20 per cent down on pre-scare levels, according to the NFU, and sales of beef through butchers and supermarkets reviving steadily, according to the Meat and Livestock Commission, there is hope that consumer confidence can be restored.

Wimpy, the third largest burger chain in the UK and the only British-owned one, sells more than 20 million beefburgers a year. It said it was reintroducing Britain as its main "approved source" of beef under the slogan "British beef is back". None of the

Local elections could be the tombstone of Conservative Party hopes



WAITING for the rush at Wincle polling station, near Macclesfield, Cheshire, where the local elections are a grave matter. The tell-

ers, who try to assess the party allegiance of voters, are rarely busy even at peak voting time in the main centres. Nationally, although

10 million people were registered to vote in yesterday's elections the turnout was, as always, low. Despite this, politicians of all parties

regard the results as a nationwide judgment on the Government's record and a bad result for the Conservatives makes it even harder

for the Government to survive until this time next year, the cut-off point for a general election.

PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

other large chains followed Wimpy's lead, but Burger King appeared to be wavering. A company statement promised it would restore British beef "once we believe consumer confidence has fully returned", but added: "Our consumer tracking indicates that currently this is not the case."

Earlier in the day, the Agriculture Minister, Douglas Hogg, briefed cabinet colleagues on his meeting with the EU council of agriculture ministers this week.

Despite the failure to secure a date for lifting of the ban on export of British beef, Mr Hogg insisted he had made progress.

He told ministers who were worried that the ban might not be lifted before the autumn that their fears were "pessimistic", a government source said.

Downing Street remains hopeful that the ban on beef byproducts, like gelatine, may be lifted after next Tuesday's meeting of the EU's scientific and veterinary committee in Brussels.

Howard to fight ruling that he acted unlawfully on Bulger

Claire Dyer
Legal Correspondent

THE High Court dealt the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, a severe blow yesterday, when two judges branded unlawful his decision to fix a minimum term of 15 years in custody for the boys who killed the toddler James Bulger.

Lord Justice Pill and Mr Justice Newman ruled that Mr Howard applied "an unlawful practice" in treating Jon Venables and Robert Thompson, who as children are detained "during her majesty's pleasure", as if they were adult murderers.

The ruling is the latest setback for Mr Howard in his continuing battle with the judges and a clear sign of the judges' determination not to let politics encroach on the sentencing function.

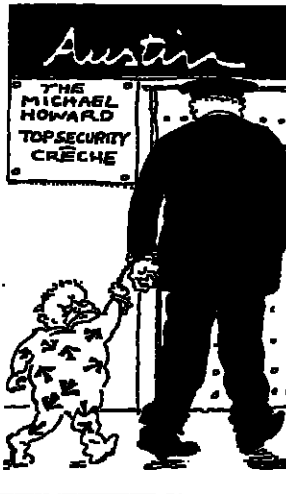
The judiciary is fighting Mr Howard's plans for mandatory and minimum sentences for certain crimes, which it says will be unworkable and fetter its discretion.

Mr Howard said that yesterday's ruling was "quite remarkable". He pledged to appeal and to legislate, if necessary, to preserve "the supremacy of Parliament".

Denise Bulger, the mother of James, condemned the judgment and said her son's killers should never be released. "They did an adult crime and they should be treated as adults."

Mr Howard said: "Let us not forget this was an appalling crime which deeply shocked the nation. This novel decision is quite remarkable. The power I exercised was given to me by Parliament. It has been exercised 400 times without challenge since 1983."

But any legislation to reverse yesterday's decision is likely to be overturned eventually by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, which is widely expected to hold that the treatment of Thompson and



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Rupert Allason, the Conservative MP, has lost his High Court action for malicious falsehood against the Daily Mirror.

World News
France is to go ahead and slash public spending in order to meet European single currency budget criteria by 1999.

Finance
The Government is to get a surprise £2 billion windfall by taking over responsibility for British Coal's pension fund.

Sport
Glenn Hoddle, the Chelsea manager, has accepted a four-year contract, worth £7m, to replace Terry Venables as England soccer coach.



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Sketch

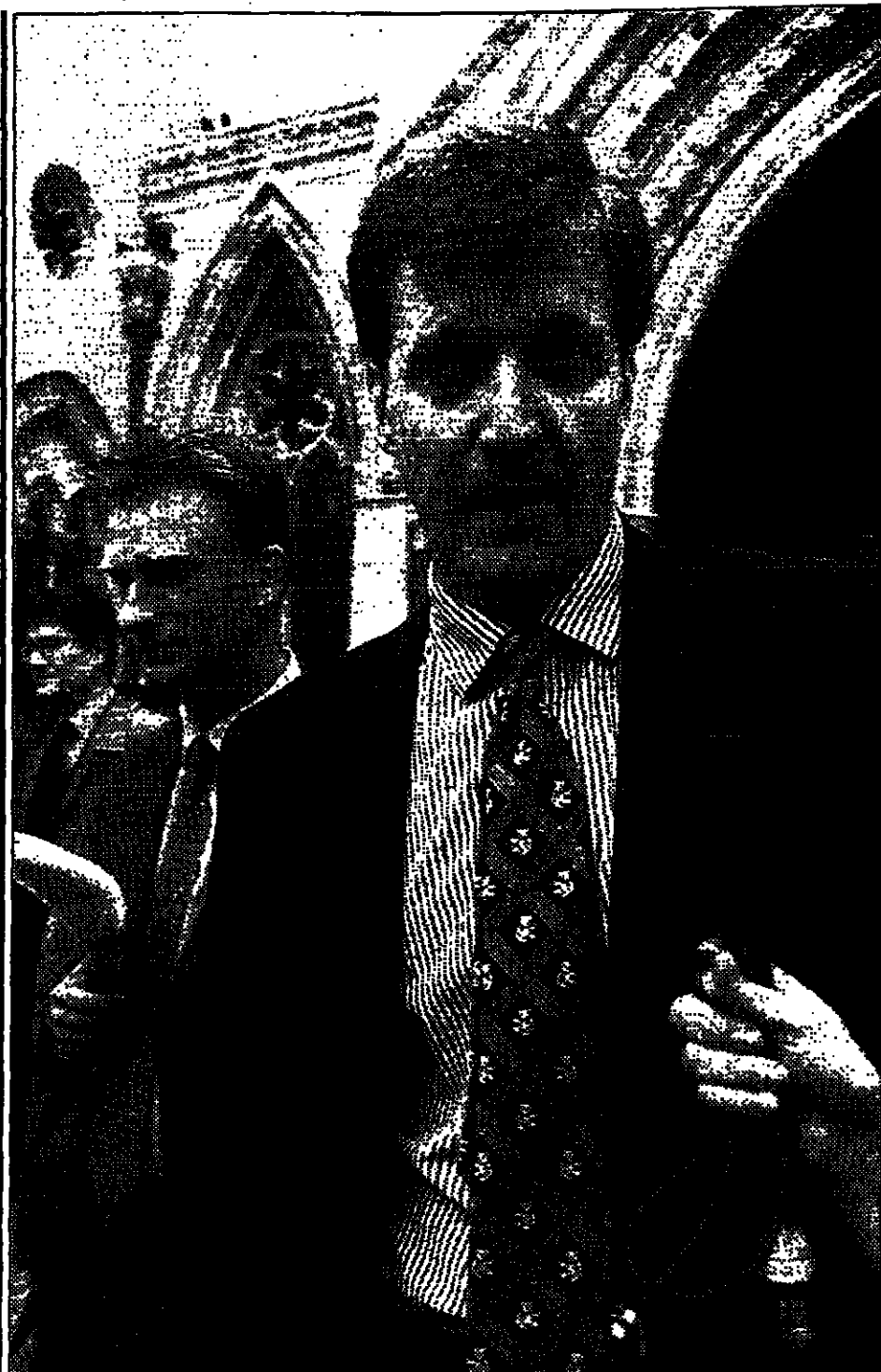
Not so noir, more a right carry on



Simon Hoggart

WE might have been watching John Major's last Question Time, but there have been so many of those...

nature of the Labour beast," he said — not a reference to Dennis Skinner, but to the party in general — "vote for it and then you'll pay for it."



Alastair Campbell: Judge termed him 'not by any means a satisfactory witness' and said he had been less than frank



Rupert Allason: Rival spy writer Chapman Pincher was once moved to describe him as 'that little whippersnapper'

PHOTOGRAPHS: SEAN SMITH

MP's case against Mirror thrown out

DAVID PALLISTER RUPERT Allason, the Tory MP for Torbay, yesterday lost his High Court action for malicious falsehood against the Daily Mirror...

Mr Allason claimed that just before the apology was published, he was told Mr Campbell had been the inspiration behind it.

ALLASON RUPERT Allason keeps his cool by practicing transcendental meditation. But that doesn't mean to say those cultivated tresses (George Best circa 1972) can't be ruffled...

CAMPBELL ALASTAIR CAMPBELL, Tony Blair's 39-year-old press secretary, gathers enemies like moss in the nation's newsrooms...

Mr Allason, aged 44, aka the writer of spy histories Nigel West, is a difficult man to please — and dolphins makes the Tory whips so apologetic.

His spy books turned him into something of a professional controversialist, incurring the displeasure of successive Conservative governments for revealing names and making allegations about Soviet penetration of the intelligence services.

First night

Muzak elevated to an art form

Sam Wollaston

TANIA MARIA Ronnie Scott's, London THE nice thing about anything Brazilian — the music, football, Brazilians, Brazil itself — is that it will almost certainly make you smile.

and wriggle on the corner of her stool as if she can't hold her music in any longer, before lifting her legs off the ground and cycling maniacally to the beat.

Most city 7-year-olds 'below par on literacy'

ALMOST 80 per cent of seven-year-olds in inner-city state schools fail to reach the reading standard expected for their age group, according to a report by the Office for Standards in Education.

spokesmen for the three London education authorities accused Chris Woodhead, the chief inspector, of slanting the evidence for political reasons.

teams of inspectors from Ofsted and the local authorities, but the final report was written by Mr Woodhead.

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Bronze Age fenland site may close due to lack of funds

Maev Kennedy Heritage Correspondent

ONE of the most famous archaeological sites in the country, Flag Fen in Cambridgeshire, may close.

tor numbers are not bringing in sufficient revenue. The site director, Francis Pryor warned last night that unless he can raise £32,000 by the end of June the site will close.

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Cantona's tormentor sent down

Vivek Chaudhary

THE Crystal Palace football fan who was the target of Eric Cantona's infamouskung-fu kick last year was fined by magistrates yesterday for provoking the footballer, but later imprisoned for launching his own attack on the prosecuting lawyer.

Matthew Simmons, aged 21, threw himself at Jeffrey McCann, grabbing him around the neck, trying to haul him over a table and appearing to kick him in the chest. He attacked the lawyer, aged 55, asked magistrates to ban Simmons from all football grounds.

As Mr McCann, aged 55, who led the prosecution's case during the three-day trial at Croydon magistrates court, south London, attempted to break free, six police officers rushed into the courtroom to restrain Simmons, who then rushed at the press box shouting: "I am innocent. I swear on the bible. You press, you are scum."

The trial was adjourned and Simmons was bundled away in handcuffs. Mary Richards, chairman of the bench, later sentenced him to seven days' imprisonment for "serious contempt".

"Your violent outburst was an obvious and serious contempt of court and we feel that a term of custody is appropriate," she told Simmons.

For his involvement in the Cantona incident, which took place during the Crystal Palace-Manchester United Premier League game in January 1995, Simmons, of Thornton Heath, Surrey, was fined £500 after being found guilty of using threatening, obscene or insulting words or behaviour

likely to cause immediately unlawful violence by another person.

He was also found guilty of a second charge of using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour within the hearing or sight of a person likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress.

Magistrates ruled, however, that there would be no fine for this offence, but they banned Simmons from all professional football grounds for 12 months.

Adam Davis, defending, told magistrates that his client apologised for the courtroom attack and that he had just snapped.

"He's had this case hanging over him for nearly a year and a half and has had to run the gauntlet of the press.

"He's suffered death threats, abuse and had bullets sent to him in the post... hearing in mind that he's 21 years of age... Having to deal with all this and the pressure building and building, he snapped."

Mr Davis also told the court Simmons had recently been in hospital, suffering from a panic attack, and had lost his job since the Cantona affair.

Simmons apologised to Mr McCann for his actions. He told the magistrates: "I don't think anything I say can justify my actions but I can only apologise to Mr McCann."

During the hearing, the court was told that Simmons rushed from his seat at the game, hurling racial abuse and making obscene gestures at Cantona as the player was sent off.

Cantona was sentenced to two weeks' jail for common assault for his part in the incident at the match. This was later reduced to 120 hours' community service.



Damien Hirst relaxes in New York before his first major one-man show opens tonight. Behind is his polka dot painting, Blue For Girls And Pink For Boys. PHOTOGRAPH: ELLEN BINDER

Damien Hirst's cows send New York into a pickle

The artist is drawing unusual critics — health inspectors, reports Ian Katz

THE United States department of agriculture has developed a keen interest in British conceptual art. Its inspectors have been regular visitors at the gallery where a small army of artists and technicians have this week been assembling Damien Hirst's first important New York exhibition.

They are particularly interested in the work entitled Some Comfort Gained from the Acceptance of Inherent Lives in Everything. "They were worried that if someone ate it, there was no evidence that the formaldehyde would

kill BSE," explained the Turner Prize-winning artist.

"I told them nobody's going to eat it but they said that's not the point. I told them that if anyone ate it, the formaldehyde would kill them anyway, but that said that's not the point either."

It was hard enough to mount an exhibition of Hirst's animal sculptures in New York before the BSE scare. When the artist tried to display some of his trademark dead cows a few months ago, the city's health department banned the exhibit because of concern over "the

odours and fluids created by the rotting process".

Mr Hirst, aged 31, got around the objections by pickling his animals in formaldehyde, but then came the mad cow panic. US authorities first refused to allow the bovine artwork into the country because of the worldwide ban on British beef imports, only agreeing after sympathetic politicians pulled strings in Washington, he said.

Priced at \$300,000, the animal sculpture which will go on display at Manhattan's Gagosian Gallery tonight is one of Mr Hirst's most ambitious, comprising two cows, each sliced into six pieces suspended in 12 glass tanks of formaldehyde solution.

"I like to cut things open," Mr Hirst explained, tucking into a fillet steak. "It's together but separated.

It's about looking. You can see the inside and the outside at the same time."

Mr Hirst arrived in New York buoyed by the sale last week of his best-known work, the severed cow and calf duo that helped to win him the Turner Prize. The work, entitled Mother and Child Divided, has been bought by an unidentified European museum for about \$240,000.

He particularly likes working with cows because they are "the most slaughtered animal in the history of the world", yet are taken largely for granted. His latest cow work is "more like something you would do with a tiger".

Entitled "No Sense of Absolute Corruption", the exhibition also features a pig sliced in two and suspended in two tanks which will move back and forth "like a bacon

slicer". It is titled This Little Piggy Went to Market. This Little Piggy Stayed at Home.

There are also a number of his trademark spin-paintings, an eight-foot asbtry filled with cigarette butts and a brightly coloured beach-ball that levitates above a colourful air-blower. "If you don't like this show then you don't like me," said the artist. "I don't see how anyone cannot like the beach-ball piece."

A team of artists and workers laboured through the night to assemble the exhibition and iron out last-minute problems like how to stop the animal parts floating at different levels in their tanks. "Our biggest worry was that the animals had never met the tanks until they arrived here," said Hugh Allan, who runs Mr Hirst's Brixton studio. A single hoof poked out from one of the silver vacuum-packed bags in which Mr Hirst's animals were flown to the US. The artist gestured apologetically towards the greyish flesh of one cow section. "It looks better in formaldehyde. When it's in liquid it comes to life."

He just tries to "make things that I'd like to see if I went into an art gallery", he said, professing bemusement at the controversy his animal sculptures generate. "I can't see the difference between going into the butcher's and seeing it in an art gallery." The exhibition though has already elicited howls of outrage from animal rights activists and residents around the SoHo gallery.

BT £33bn merger talks collapse

Simon Beavis and Chris Barrie

BITISH Telecom's dreams of creating one of the world's biggest telephone companies collapsed last night with the failure of £33 billion merger talks with its erstwhile rival, Cable & Wireless.

Five months of tough negotiations ended after a marathon meeting of the C&W board agreed that the hurdles to a merger were too high.

The blow to BT's plans to transform itself into one of the world's most powerful international players in the lucrative and fast growing telecoms market leaves it in a strategic cul-de-sac, just as it is steepling itself for a battle over telephone prices with the UK regulator which could end up in a Monopolies Commission inquiry.

Both companies face the immediate prospect of a collapse in their share prices. Had talks proved successful, BT would have gained a powerful foothold in the Asia-Pacific market, through Cable & Wireless's valuable 57.5 per cent stake in Hong Kong Telecom, an even stronger base in Germany and consolidation of its US position.

The merger would have created a telecoms giant employing 180,000 staff worldwide, with a turnover of £20 billion. But observers of the talks suggested that the steam appeared to have gone out of the negotiations in the last five days as both sides grappled with a series of complex regulatory issues, both at home and abroad, which looked increasingly insurmountable.

BT, led by its chairman, Sir Iain Vallance, said last night: "Our conclusion was that the risks, at this stage, outweighed the prospective opportunities."

Fund managers said last night that the rocky relations between BT and the British Telecoms watchdog, Don Cruickshank, were a decisive factor behind the collapse.

Channel 4 calls off show featuring Diana lookalike

Barbie Dutter

A TELEVISION programme in which a Diana lookalike is put on the couch in a simulated psychoanalysis of the Princess of Wales was last night pulled by Channel 4.

The Without Walls programme, psychoanalysing Diana, was to be transmitted on Tuesday but was shelved after Channel 4's controller, Michael Grade, and director of programmes, John Willis, declared it "did not work".

Their decision came after the show's contents were outlined by a number of newspapers, prompting the Princess's office to contact Channel 4 to express concern and ask for a preview cassette. The request was refused.

In the half-hour programme, a direct parallel is drawn between the Princess's bulimia and her "consumption and regurgitation" of men. The lookalike, Nicky Lilley, utters a number of epithets, railing against the media and



Princess Diana: aides made request for tape

calling Prince Charles a "bastard". The programme's presenter, psychoanalyst Dylan Evans, who conducts the reconstructed cross-examination of the "Princess", claims Diana is fixated on her younger brother Charles.

Mr Willis said in a statement last night: "This was a very innovative concept. In the end, Michael Grade and I decided that the idea did not work."

Swiss banks in deal with Jews

Ian Katz in New York

SWISS bankers have agreed to open their previously guarded vaults of secrecy to allow Jewish groups to hunt for millions of dollars believed to have been deposited before and during the second world war by Holocaust victims.

Under an agreement signed yesterday in New York, a team of independent auditors will be given "unfettered access to all relevant files" held by the Swiss financial institutions, where many European Jews opened accounts to protect their assets from the Nazis.

Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, said the agreement would be "a milestone if the letter and spirit are carried out". Representatives of the Congress, the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, and the Swiss Bankers' Association flew to New York to sign the two-page document.

Jewish organisations and relatives of those killed by the Nazis have been fighting for years to be allowed to search the records of Swiss banks for accounts which have lain dormant since the war.

They claim that Swiss banks have grossly underestimated the sums deposited by Holocaust victims. In September, the Swiss Bankers' Association said a survey of its members had identified \$34.1 million in some 775 accounts, which appeared to belong to Jews later killed by the Nazis.

Jewish organisations claim that the true figure may be as high as \$7 billion, pointing out that the Swiss Bankers' Association figures do not in-

clude accounts opened by Swiss nationals who may have been acting for Jews from other European countries.

Pressure on the Swiss authorities for a more open investigation of wartime accounts has come from President Clinton and the Senate banking committee, which held hearings on the issue last week.

Under yesterday's agreement, a team of six members — three appointed by Jewish groups and three by the banks — will supervise the auditors' hunt for dormant accounts.

The deal is a step towards resolving a long dispute between international Jewry and the Swiss banks. Many heirs of Holocaust victims believe the banks have tried to hide behind their secrecy laws to avoid restoring the money to its rightful owners.

Ironically, Switzerland framed its famous financial secrecy laws in the 1930s precisely to attract fearful customers like the European Jews, desperate to hide their money from the Nazis.

The auditors face a massive task. They plan to examine the records for all accounts opened in Swiss banks between the early 1930s and the mid-1940s which have shown no activity since then.

Recently released documents have identified 182 accounts opened by Romanian Jews in one Swiss bank alone. Totalling around \$2 million when the deposits were made, the sum in the accounts is estimated to have swollen to \$20 million with interest.

Where heirs cannot be found to claim the money, the funds will be distributed to charities.

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I asked Julian Senior, vice-president of publicity for Warner in London, if they really expect Kubrick to deliver after all those years. "We keep paying the overhead on that hope and belief," he said.
Peter Lennon

4 BRITAIN Lottery 'has not robbed charities'

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

MORE than twice as many families are playing the National Lottery as are giving direct to charity, according to the first comprehensive official figures published yesterday.

Ministers cited the figures as proof that the overall level of charitable giving had not been hit by the lottery. But charity leaders said the study had not fully covered fundraising forms most vulnerable to lottery competition.

The figures come from provisional 1995 results of the Government's Family Expenditure Survey, based on interviews with 6,780 households, and have been released early because the Department of National Heritage is due this month to report to Parliament on how the lottery has affected charitable giving.

The Office for National Statistics, which undertakes the survey, admits that the results "significantly under-record" lottery spending, and is investigating why, but maintains that they still represent a valuable indicator.

According to the results, total spending on the lottery (including scratchcard games) is an average £3.20 for households which participate. Including those households which do not play the lottery, the average is £2.20 a week. This compares to a figure of £3.80 for all households, derived from the records of Camelot, the lottery operator.

The expenditure survey findings show that lottery spending among participating households rose from £1.90 for the poorest fifth, ranked by income, to £3.80 for the richest two-fifths.

Virginia Bottomley, Heritage Secretary, said it was reassuring that spending related directly to income. The survey also showed that "there continues to be no hard evidence that people are giving less to charity".

This was a reference to the survey finding that average charitable giving among all households in 1995 was £1.30 a week, the same as in 1994, and that the proportion of households saying they gave to charity was also virtually unchanged at 32 per cent (average giving £4.10).

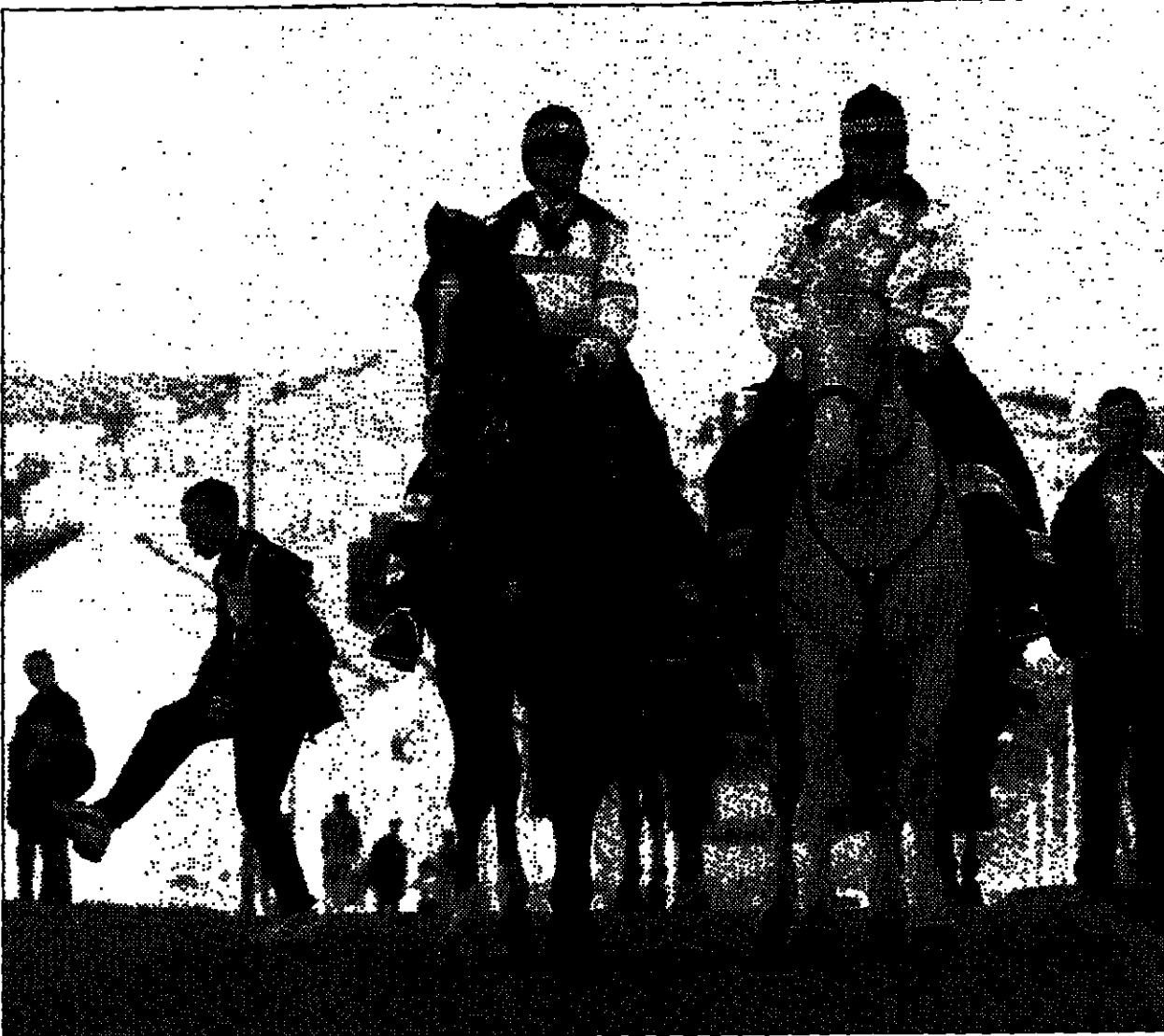
However, this compares with 70 per cent who say they play the lottery — 4,726 of the 6,780 sample, against 2,143 giving to charity. Moreover, the survey's definition of charitable giving is based in direct cash contributions and excludes subscriptions and proceeds of raffles, bazaars, and charity shops.

A spokesman for the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, which has argued the lottery has badly hit many charities, said: "Our research shows the areas not included are those most affected by the lottery."

The survey findings show that people aged 50-65 are those spending most on the lottery (an average £3.60 a week among participating households), and those aged over 75 the least (£2.10). Perhaps surprisingly, those aged under 30 spend only £2.70.

Christian Aid fears it could lose up to £2 million if its annual fundraising week coincides with a rollover of the lottery jackpot, writes *Madeleine Bunting*. Contingency plans for last-minute advertising to combat a rollover have been drawn up by the charity, following a drop of £200,000 last year attributed to the lottery. Christian Aid Week, which starts a week on Monday, May 13, is the biggest third world fundraising event in Britain. Donations totalled £9 million last year.

"We are really concerned the lottery could have a significant impact. We could lose millions," said Kate Phillips, Christian Aid's external relations director. It raises more than a third of its £25 million annual donated income in the week, and also concentrates its £500,000 advertising budget in the same week.



Police in Easterhouse where gang fighting has declined steeply since mounted patrols began. PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MacLEOD

Mounted police used to curb street fighting

Erland Clooston

MOUNTED police have been drafted in to help suppress gang fighting at a Glasgow housing estate.

Each night four mounted policemen patrol Easterhouse, on the outskirts of Glasgow, where scores of sword- and machete-wielding teenagers have been active. Police are cautiously calling the week-old experiment a success, with a steep decline in the most institutionalised street fighting.

The patrols are the idea of Superintendent David Mulhern, who discovered that inter-territorial warfare was the principal worry of residents when he took charge of operations in the sprawling 1960s estate last August.

Mr Mulhern's theory is that the horses' combination of bulk and manoeuvrability will deter the groups from pursuing each other round the parkland created by cutting the num-

ber of Easterhouse homes from 30,000 to 16,000.

Since the horses were introduced alongside 13 other members of the newly-created Disorder Unit, nightly calls reporting fights have shrunk from 12 to two.

Mr Mulhern views the feud as a game that has got out of hand: "It's wee boys playing chasie, but it just needs someone to slip for them to become a murder statistic." Every year at least one boy is beaten or stabbed to death, with many seriously wounded.

The mounted policemen are being supplemented by school visits and a plan to create six cafes, to be run by young people stranded by a local unemployment rate of 18 per cent. At the Easterhouse Youth Centre, set to close next month because of lack of funding, supervisor and former gang member Willie Sawers warned Mr Mulhern not to raise his hopes. "I hope it works, but when the light nights come up, that's when the fighting really starts."

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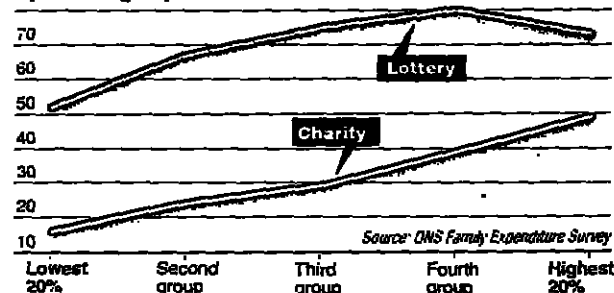
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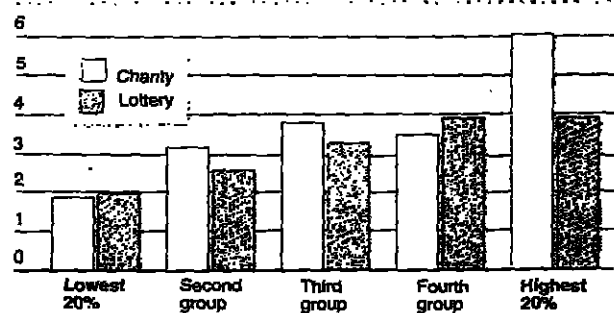
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Lottery or charity?

% of households taking part in the lottery and giving to charity, by income group



Average weekly expenditure (£), of participating households



Commons move to pardon 300 executed WW1 soldiers

John Ezard

THREE hundred British soldiers shot by firing squads in the first world war for military offences including desertion and cowardice could be posthumously pardoned following a Commons vote next week.

Many of the soldiers were shell-shocked. Many of their relatives did not learn of the true reason for their deaths until decades afterwards.

The call for pardons made yesterday by the Labour MP Andrew MacKinlay is aimed at comforting the surviving veterans and relatives "in the evening of their lives". It has the backing of a Royal British Legion conference vote.

But government ministers are unlikely to be sympathetic. The Ministry of Defence said last night: "We cannot reverse history. The law of the land was that capital punishment was used on those who deserted and so on. One cannot reverse that any more than one can remove the stigma from those

who had their relatives hanged for murder in the 1950s, before capital punishment was repealed. Our parliament does not do retrospective legislation.

Teddy Noyce, chairman of the London and South-east branch of the Old Contemptibles Association, representing veterans who fought in the war, said: "They have mixed feelings.

"Some are sympathetic, others not. The other day I was reading an unpublished Gallipoli diary entry about an executed man. It said: 'Well, he'd had three chances...' — meaning he'd already committed the offence three times.

"It's very difficult to put today's values on yesterday's events."

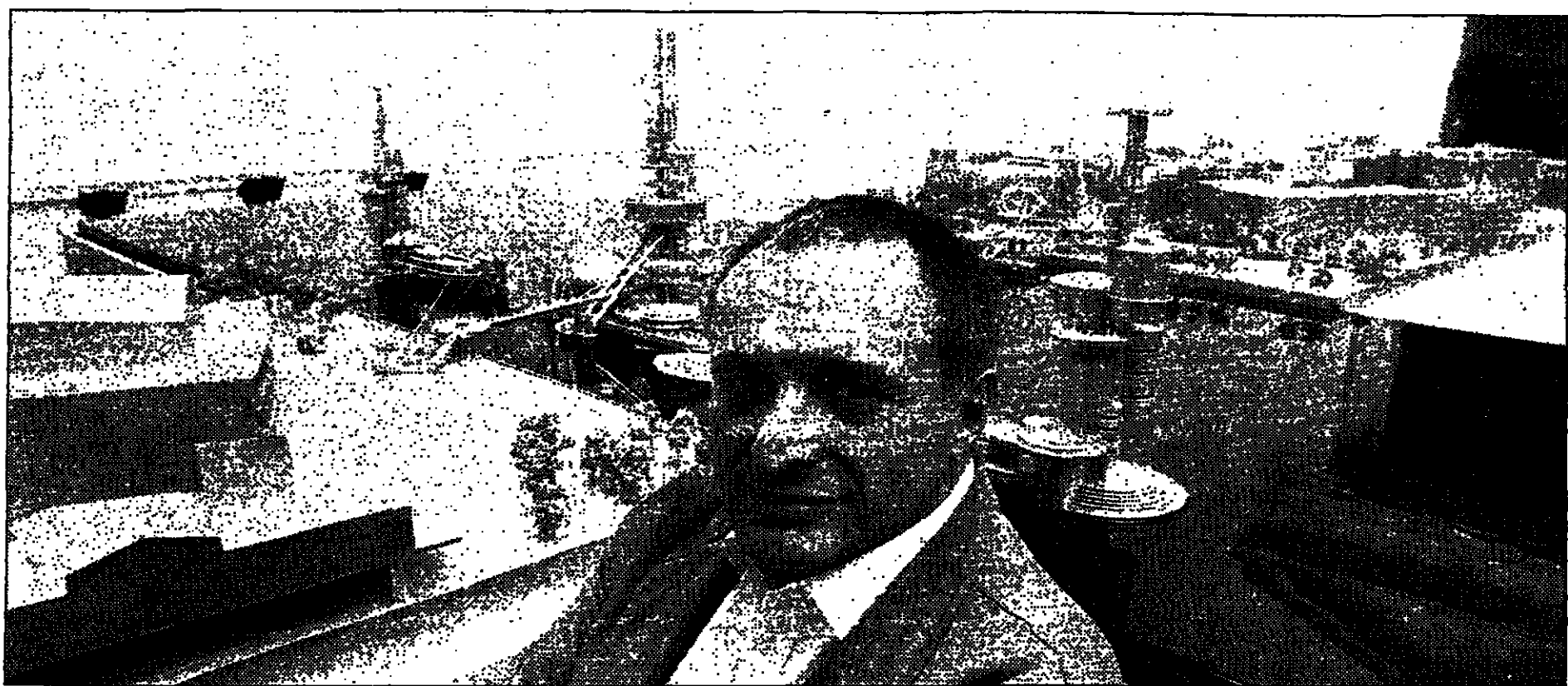
Mr MacKinlay, MP for Thurrock in Essex, is tabling the call as amendments to the Armed Forces Bill, which he hopes will be voted on by the Commons on Thursday. He said he had all-party support. A 26,000-strong petition has already been presented to Parliament.

To judge from some of the letters I receive, there are those for whom our festival at Glastonbury has become a kind of Mecca.
Michael Eavis

Handwritten signature or mark at the bottom of the page.

Architect makes a plea to end 'the alienation and anger that results in the burning of cities'. James Meikle reports

Rogers's blueprint for a Britain of culture and fun



Sir Richard Rogers says there should be greater investment from the private and public sectors to help the poor out of a spiral of despair

PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEASER

James Meikle

ONE of Britain's most eminent architects yesterday appealed for a social and political revolution to match the creation of the welfare state, reverse Britain's embarrassment with culture, and end its love affair with the past.

poor out of a spiral of despair. A new Labour government should create a senior cabinet post responsible for developing "creative leisure", or "a community of culture" to combat growing divisions in society. The Department of National Heritage should undergo a name and role change. "Heritage is about buildings; culture is about people. Heritage is about the past, present, and future. Heritage encourages the notion of Britain looking over its shoulder. We have a problem with the word culture no one else has."

In an interview with the Guardian, he said that when he was involved in the design of the Pompidou Centre in Paris, it had to be talked of in terms like "fun palace" rather than cultural activity. "And we talk of leisure with a Victorian feeling of guilt." Adding his voice to Tony Blair's stonewalling debate, Sir Richard, who in last year's BBC Reith lectures railed against the privatisation and brutalisation of cities, said the community sector needed help from the market and the state. "An erosion of civic responsibility and changing patterns of employment had helped

create a crisis of confidence, alienation, and anger. "It ends up with the burning of cities and the creation of ghettos... We have lost civic identity, we have lost pride, purpose and public participation." In the industrial age, people's lives were fully occupied. Now many people faced a life without traditional forms of work, and had little to fill the void. Volunteers already worked in schools, hospitals, with old people, and with those in need of shelter. Self-help tenants' organisations on big public housing estates, or self-build construction groups,

showed how communities could prosper with the right leadership, enthusiasm, and support. "If you have involved citizens in these communities, you are well on the way to creating a responsible society. You need a carrot. Perhaps if you do a certain amount of 'credit' hours, you get some payment rather than simply be 'unemployed', or have some tax advantage if you are wealthy enough." Less tax should fall on individuals, more on the production of goods and services. "The market must realise it costs billions and billions to build new prisons, to supply drug needs, to have a totally

spiritless public. It puts tourists off, if nothing simpler, to go down poor streets full of poor people. "At the moment the reaction of the wealthy has been both 'put them in prison' and 'we will go into a nice rich ghetto where I enter my estate or my office doors by using an electronic hand-printer.' This helped to create 'a separation where you don't even see the poor anymore.' "We are changing to automation because it gives us greater wealth. The money is there. It is work that is not there." The National Lottery was

helping the community sector, including fostering developments like "discovery" centres and shops, often with hi-tech interactive equipment that used words, sounds, and pictures to help educate people about their own communities, science, and the environment. But deeper change was needed. "We are seeing the death of the welfare state, which in some ways is a bit paternalistic, although many of its aims are still valid. We are seeing the death of the unions which gave some balance economically between rich and poor, and now there is no one left to fight for the poor."

"Culture is everything from cafe life to the most sophisticated form of art and music. It is not talking about an elite. We should have both opera and the local discovery shop." Within the next year, the country could have the first true government of the post-industrial age. New institutions were needed to cross present "club" boundaries, where people could meet face-to-face or through technology, to exchange ideas and form "a coalition of wage-earners, community workers, part-timers, the retired and unemployed who can share fairly the benefits of an ever richer society."



The Pompidou Centre in Paris: it had to be talked of in terms like 'fun palace' rather than cultural activity

'Heritage is about buildings; culture is about people. Heritage is about the past; culture is about the present, and the future. Heritage encourages the notion of Britain looking over its shoulder. We have a problem with the word culture no one else has'

'We have lost civic identity, we have lost pride, purpose, and public participation... If you have involved citizens you are well on the way to creating a responsible society'

'The market must realise it costs billions to build new prisons, to supply drug needs, to have a totally spiritless public. It puts tourists off, if nothing simpler, to go down poor streets full of poor people'

Appeal court overturns drug dealing conviction

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

AN IRANIAN who claimed that the police had fabricated evidence against him on a heroin dealing charge yesterday won his appeal against conviction. It is believed to be the first case in which the Court of Appeal accepted a linguist as an expert witness for evaluating police evidence on alleged verbal admissions. Daniel Raphael, aged 35, from west London, succeeded in his appeal against his 1989 conviction for possession of heroin with intent to supply. He served 44 months of a five year sentence and says he has been unable to work since because of injuries sustained during his arrest. He is now bringing a civil action against the police. Mr Raphael, who came to Britain in 1978, was arrested at his home in 1988. The arresting officers claimed he had made damning admissions during the raid.

The detectives claimed they had seen him flush a packet of heroin down the toilet, saying: "Fuck it. It was heroin. I didn't want to get caught holding it." He had allegedly added: "I sell a bit." Yesterday Edward Fitzgerald, QC, for Mr Raphael, told Lord Justice Kennedy, sitting with Mr Justice Holland and Judge Stephens, QC, that the evidence had been fabricated. He said there had been a "flagrant abuse" of procedures in that Mr Raphael had not been properly cautioned and had been interrogated in his home rather than at a police station. "There was no evidence apart from the officers' note that the admissions were made," said Mr Fitzgerald. "This is a conviction obtained solely as a result of evidence which was unfairly obtained. There has been a massive bypassing of safeguards."

partment who had analysed the words attributed to Mr Raphael. She compared the speech pattern which the police alleged he had used with the one he used in his trial. Her analysis was that it was unlikely that the conversation had taken place as claimed by police. Ms Blackwell was not called to give evidence because Lord Justice Kennedy granted the appeal after accepting Mr Fitzgerald's argument that the evidence should have been ruled inadmissible at the trial. After the case, Ms Blackwell said she believed it was the first time linguistic findings had been accepted by the appeal court as expert evidence in such a case. David Lawton, Mr Raphael's solicitor, said an action for malicious prosecution would be brought against the Metropolitan police. Mr Raphael, a former restaurateur and shopkeeper, said that he was pleased his name had been cleared but sorry it had taken so long.

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President nervous of commerce exploding upon election agenda

Clinton in quandary over Chinese trade 'piracy'

Martin Walker in Washington

THE presidential election campaign and concern about policy towards China are buffeting Bill Clinton's administration as it considers whether to impose more than \$1 billion-worth (€890 million) of sanctions against Beijing for its failure to carry out last year's agreement to control the piracy of compact discs, computer software and videos.

"Piracy remains rampant and economic damage to US industries continues to rise," according to a report to Congress by the United States trade representative. Officials have threatened sanctions, warning the US "will not hesitate to enforce our trade laws".

Despite the threat, Ira Shapiro, the deputy US trade

chief, yesterday told reporters that China was "on its own track" of consultations. In effect, the decision on whether to impose sanctions has been left to President Clinton.

The White House is waiting for a long-promised — but repeatedly delayed — speech on China by Senator Bob Dole, the Republican presidential challenger, and fears an attack on Mr Clinton's "appeasement" of Beijing.

After China's sabre-rattling against Taiwan in March, and the precautionary deployment of two US aircraft carriers, a partisan election-year clash may be looming over one of the most delicate issues in US foreign policy.

Republicans have traditionally favoured Taiwan. The chairman of the senate foreign relations committee, Jesse Helms, and the speaker of the House of Representa-

tives, Newt Gingrich, have both suggested that Taiwan's independence should be recognised and supported.

Mr Dole is not expected to go that far, but he will probably attack Mr Clinton for allowing China to enjoy what appears likely to be a \$50 billion trade surplus with the US this year.

To complicate matters, Mr Clinton has to decide by June 3 whether to continue granting China "most favoured nation" trading status.

Whatever he decides will prove controversial, with supporters of Tibet, human rights and Taiwan confronting corporate America, whose eyes are fixed hungrily on the world's most promising and fastest-growing market.

The key issue remains whether China will be slowly liberalised by an open trading regime, or whether this can

only be done through tough US measures that force it to abide by international trading rules. Mr Clinton has given China the benefit of the doubt so far, after intense lobbying by US corporations and his own commerce secretary, the late Ron Brown.

This may become difficult to justify following the trade representative's report, which flatly says that Beijing "has failed to stop illegal CD, video and CD-Rom production at some 31 plants operating in China, failed to prevent the export of infringing goods, or to honour its promises to grant market access for legitimate audio-visual products".

After splitting his own party and relying on Republicans to pass free trade pacts with Mexico and the Gatt signatories, Mr Clinton is nervous of trade becoming an election issue.



Safe... Police rescue a Vietnamese child whose mother tried to jump from a navy ship with her yesterday as Malaysia forcibly deported a group of 126 boat people to Vietnam. The woman was restrained by police. PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE PALA

Dissident speaks Hanoi's mind

The best-known inmate of Camp 5 has much in common now with those who keep him there. Keith Richburg reports

THE Vietnamese government views Pham Duc Kham, serving 12 years in prison for plotting a coup, as the most dangerous kind of counter-revolutionary.

But Mr Kham sounds anything but violent or radical. He expresses a fervent belief in democracy and argues that change must come gradually. He supports the communist government's economic liberalisation but wants political reform too.

Mr Kham, aged 64, was imprisoned in 1980 for circulating a newsletter advocating democracy. Vietnam's interior ministry allowed him to be interviewed this month. It was the first time a journalist had been allowed inside a prison to meet an inmate, and the first officially sanctioned interview with a known dissident.

Vietnamese officials apparently granted the request to counter criticism of their human rights record and secretive prison system.

The prison, Camp 5, was carved out of a French coffee plantation 49 years ago in a remote mountainous area of Thanh Hoa Province, about

150 miles south of Hanoi. The warden, Colonel Pham Huu Ninh, said the prison had about 1,000 inmates, mostly living five to a room.

All prisoners, except the elderly, are assigned to hard labour — farm work and mining in the mountains — six days a week.

Prisoners can watch television and receive newspapers and magazines. They are allowed visitors once every three months and married prisoners can have overnight conjugal visits.

Mr Kham, a former South Vietnamese army officer who was involved in an abortive 1962 coup against the president, Ngo Dinh Diem, is the best-known inmate here.

For more than half an hour, he answered questions about his past anti-government activities and Vietnam's political evolution. He emerged as a moderate man whose views on the need for steady progress to reform seem to echo the debate taking place openly in the top echelons of the Communist Party.

Mr Kham and others "were only saying in an embarrass-

ing, public way what Vietnamese officials are saying and believe privately", said Dinah PoKempner of Human Rights Watch/Asia. She and other observers see signs that Vietnam wants to begin resolving political cases, mainly because its leaders recognise that such matters are a sore point in a developing relationship with the US.

Six years ago, Mr Kham belonged to a small, loose circle of southern democracy advocates, led by an academic, Doan Viet Hoat, who expressed their ideas in a newsletter called Freedom Forum which they circulated in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. Members of the group were quickly rounded up and charged with trying to overthrow the government.

Mr Hoat was sentenced to 15 years in prison, and is now in a remote prison near the

Laotian border. His wife, Tran Thi Thuc, has been denied a visa to visit him.

Mr Kham's 16-year sentence was reduced to 12. He has spent roughly a third of his life in prisons. After the unsuccessful 1962 coup, Mr Kham was jailed for nearly two years, until Mr Diem was overthrown and assassinated.

"I opposed the old regime. I could have benefited from it, but I believe in freedom and democracy," Mr Kham said. "I was ready to join that effort to renew the country," Mr Kham said.

He realised the newsletter would be a direct affront to Vietnam's leaders. Still, he insists his aim was never to overthrow the government but to promote peaceful change. "We only called for the implementation of democratisation," he said. "My activity was so limited." — Washington Post.

Government tensions reach crisis point in Phnom Penh

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok

TENSION between former communists and royalists in Cambodia's coalition government turned into a crisis yesterday as the second prime minister, Hun Sen, launched a bitter attack on his co-premier, Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

Speaking on Phnom Penh radio, Mr Hun Sen blamed Prince Ranariddh for the army's failure to capture the border town of Pailin from the Khmer Rouge after months of fighting and heavy casualties.

Mr Hun Sen, of the once communist Cambodian People's Party (CPP), did not name the prince but referred to "a great storm" in March when Prince Ranariddh threatened to pull his royalist party FUNCINPEC out of the coalition, accusing the CPP of failing to honour power-sharing agreements. The threat had undermined military morale and performance, he said. "Because of it we have offered a great gift to the Khmer Rouge."

Mr Hun Sen added: "If they want to leave [the government], let them leave. But if they want to dissolve the government I will oppose it."

The broadcast escalated tension in the capital, which is already awash with rumours of troop manoeuvres involving units loyal to either party.

Mr Hun Sen insists his enemies are planning to kill him.

The political temperature started to rise at the weekend when Mr Hun Sen bluntly warned the royal family that he would resort to military force to block any move to dissolve the national assembly.

The CPP leader, Chea Sim, who returned to Cambodia yesterday after medical treatment abroad, has reportedly started moves to try to cool the situation.

But whatever happens, analysts say it will be difficult for the two prime ministers ever to return to a normal working relationship.

Fraud and violence mar voting in fearful Bihar

Suzanne Goldenberg in Sultampur, Bihar

THE man dropped his voice to a whisper, his face showing his fear. "Kindly do me this favour. We need a police force. There is trouble here." Then he flashed the identity card of a party worker and vanished.

Voting at Hajipur polling booth No. 81 in the school in Sultampur village appeared orderly. Men queued quietly to collect their ballot papers before entering to vote. But none of them had their fingers stamped with the ink that would prevent them from voting again, and the presiding officer seemed unconcerned about the empty ballot box lying open on the porch.

Twenty constituencies in Bihar, situated north of the Ganges, voted in the second day of polling in India's general election yesterday. The last day of voting across the country for all but a handful of seats is May 7.

A few years ago, Bihar was notorious for the ease with

which it accepted known criminals as politicians and for the brazenness of its rigging. In 1990 around 40 members of the state legislative assembly had criminal records; 600 people were killed during campaigns for state assembly elections last year. Election commission officials in New Delhi declared nearly half the 54 seats in India's second most populous state "sensitive" or "hyper-sensitive", requiring outside security forces to keep order.

Yesterday, Bihar tried to shake off that reputation. It only partly succeeded. Seven of the eight people killed in election violence around the country during the day died in Bihar. The state election commissioner, R. J. M. Pillai, had received about 60 complaints of rigging by mid-afternoon. But that was "better than expected", he said. New Delhi ordered political parties and landlords to disband their private armies and sent 15,000 police and paramilitary forces to the state.

But there was still widespread evidence of vote fraud:

booths over-run by thugs from a particular party, children taking the places of legitimate voters, and ballot boxes with a few hundred papers inserted even before the polls opened.

In some polling booths in Hajipur, north of Patna, 50 per cent turnouts were claimed within two hours of the polls opening, against an official mid-afternoon average of 36 per cent. "Presiding officers don't even know how to seal a ballot box," said a man outside polling booth No. 38 in the town of Hajipur.

The Junta Janata Dal, which holds power in the state, and its main challenger, the Samata Party, both claim they are fighting for social justice for the poor. Both also appear to be rigging votes in their respective strongholds.

The presence of eight railway police transformed Dumri polling station. Unlike most of the other polling booths of Bihar, Dumri was full of women who arrived in bright new saris to exercise their franchise and gossip with the other villagers.

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News in brief

Bonn rethinks refugee plan
Germany may have to rethink plans to start sending home 320,000 Bosnian refugees in July, Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobson, Bonn's ombudsman for foreigners' affairs said.

"Certainly, refugees should not wait until everything in the former Yugoslavia has been rebuilt by other people — but they should not be sent back to areas where aggression still reigns," Ms Schmalz-Jacobson told MDR radio.

Asked about the July 1 deadline, she said: "I think that will have to be looked at again." — Reuter.

Israeli appeal
Yigal Amir, who killed Israel's prime minister Yitzhak Rabin last November, appealed against his conviction to the supreme court yesterday based on evidence that a second gunman may have been involved, his lawyer, Gabi Shahar, said in Jerusalem. — Reuter.

Cafe to be razed
Tasmania's premier, Tony Rundle, announced in Hobart yesterday that his government would demolish the Port Arthur cafe where 20 of the 35 victims of the weekend shooting massacre died, on the wishes of the victims' family. — Reuter.

Pupils fight fire
Mongolian schoolboys joined thousands of soldiers fighting bushfires whipped up across the steppes by high winds yesterday as the death toll caused by scores of fires rose to 19, with 60 injured. The fires have destroyed about 31,000 square miles of forests and pastureland. — Reuter.

Beijing snub
Beijing's quasi-official Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait yesterday rebuffed a suggestion by Taipei to resume talks, with a curt letter reminding the island it must abandon all pretensions to independence. — Reuter.

Oil deal 'close'
France's foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, said yesterday that Iraq was close to achieving a breakthrough in talks with the United Nations aimed at agreeing on a resumption of oil exports, which were cut off by the UN after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. — Reuter.

Bardot urges ban
The former actress Brigitte Bardot, now an animal rights activist, yesterday urged Song Young Shik, who leads the campaign to stage the 2002 football World Cup in South Korea, to lobby the government for a ban on eating dogs. — Reuter.

Climbing cleaners
Fifteen Nepali climbers carrying sacks will start to collect rubbish on Mount Everest next week, which has become known as the highest junkyard on earth. They will also try to bring down the bodies of dead climbers, said officials. — Reuter.

William Morris's name is synonymous with irretrievable nostalgia and a visionary utopianism. He was not just a wallpaper designer but a revolutionary socialist — a combination that might have been the invention of a satirist.

Deyan Sudjic, Review page 6

Tudjman st
up campak
stifle critic

Wrights
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Tudjman steps up campaign to stifle critics

Julian Borger in Zagreb

THE Croatian government has intensified its campaign against critics in the press and local government, closing an independent newspaper and dissolving the opposition-led Zagreb city council less than a fortnight before the country formally joins the Council of Europe, a forum for the promotion of democracy and human rights.

Panorama, a weekly tabloid, was closed by the financial police. The official reason was violation of property and environmental laws, but the decision came only days after the newspaper printed a critical profile of President Franjo Tudjman.

Two days earlier, Zagreb's city council was dissolved, after being elected last year with an opposition majority. President Tudjman had already made it clear he would not surrender control of the capital, by vetoing — on "national security" grounds — four nominee mayors put forward by the opposition.

When the Council of Europe's assembly voted last week to admit Croatia despite its patchy human rights record, European diplomats in Zagreb said the move would strengthen Croatian moderates and increase Western leverage on the government.

School fights to rid itself of Curie legacy

Alister Doyle in Nogent-sur-Marne

FRENCH children returned to a nursery school after parents lost a new round in a battle to have it closed because of radioactive leaks linked to the work of Marie Curie, the Nobel laureate.

The nursery was built in 1989 on a site used by Curie for her pioneering experiments to extract radium, which was later used to treat cancer through radiotherapy. Curie herself died of radiation poisoning in 1934.

The school for children aged from three to six was closed in December after worryingly high levels of radon gas had been found seeping into the classrooms. It reopened after repairs to plug leaks from waste left by Curie's research into radium dumped under the building.

"Nogent-sur-Marne should be twinned with Chernobyl," said Dominique Neville, whose son attends the school. "You can't let children go to school on a radioactive site. It should be closed."

Hervé Debaecker, an official at the local council, said: "Radon levels have fallen spectacularly. The school is safe." Mr Debaecker said radon levels were now well within those acceptable under European Union recommendations.

Most parents felt sufficiently reassured to let their children return after five months during which they had been farmed out in nearby schools.

fragile state of the Balkan peace settlement. The Panorama closure comes less than a month after another independent newspaper, Novi List, was fined more than £1 million for allegedly evading customs duty on printing equipment. Its editors deny any wrongdoing.

The Tudjman government has also had a poor record on the treatment of minorities in particular Serbs. Hundreds of Serb civilians were killed after the government stormed the separatist region of Krajina last year.

Human rights officials say about 20,000 Croatian Serbs, who fled during the offensive, have applied to resettle in their former homes, but only a handful have been allowed to return.

There is little doubt that President Tudjman is personally involved in the campaign against dissent. He intervened repeatedly to veto opposition candidates for the post of Zagreb's mayor, saying opposition leadership in the capital would weaken Croatia.

Mr Tudjman appears to be drifting towards the far right, as next year's presidential elections approach. Last month he raised the possibility of repatriating the remains of Ante Pavelic, the leader of Croatia's pro-Nazi wartime regime.

European diplomats say the president, aged 74, is an increasing embarrassment to the rest of the government, which they describe as modernising and pro-Western.

New Russian doll will be selling her soul

James Meek in Moscow

THE MAKERS of Barbie dolls can show all the material comforts of the Western world on their blonde creation — designer clothes, scuba equipment, ponies — but there is one thing they cannot miniaturise and mass-produce in plastic: the Russian soul.

Or so says the Moscow fashion designer Vyacheslav Zaitsev, who is set to launch a new Russian doll which he hopes will capture the hearts of the country's young girls.

If Mr Zaitsev had his way, Barbie and her playmate Ken would have their little vises cancelled and be put on the first plane west. Describing Barbie she was "an absolutely cold, cynical, pragmatic creation, demonstrative of an obsession with sex."

He said his National Creative Council had chosen three under-nines from more than 15,000 young Russian girls as models for the new doll, Marusya. She would be chubby, endy, and come equipped with a soul.

It is not clear how Marusya will fare against the hugely popular Barbie, given that America's dolls, unlike Russia's, represent an aspiration to womanhood.

"It was very surprising for us when somebody brought dolls wearing national costume back from Czechoslovakia and we found breasts underneath. It was very interesting," recalled a woman who grew up in the 1970s.

France's efforts to qualify for the single European currency could provoke further industrial unrest

Juppé orders ministers to make cuts

Paul Webster in Paris

THE French government decided yesterday to run the risk of a new wave of industrial unrest by slashing public spending to meet the budget criteria for the European single currency before 1999.

The prime minister, Alain Juppé, whose tough economic policies led to national strikes last autumn, called a surprise cabinet meeting to order ministers to make savings expected to reach £7.4 billion over the next 18 months.

Mr Juppé said he was determined to match the extent of budgetary sacrifices promised by the German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and to meet President Jacques Chirac's

demands for "draconian" cuts. The move was seen as likely to anger public sector trade unions.

Last weekend Mr Chirac said a change of mentality on public spending had to be made either voluntarily or by force, abandoning his campaign commitment to increase government investment to reduce the 3 million unemployment rate.

Mr Juppé's office said yesterday's meeting was intended to produce urgent suggestions on cuts before parliament discusses immediate public expenditure savings later this month.

The budget deficit, now about 5 per cent, has to be reduced to a maximum 3 per cent to meet conditions for joining a single currency.

"No figure has been fixed yet on eventual savings, but the effort needed to meet targets will mean cuts on a scale never seen before," an official said.

Since 1988, government outgoings have grown faster than the inflation rate under both Socialist and Gaullist-led cabinets, and this year's budget is already FF90 billion (about £24 billion) in the red.

A presidential promise not to raise more taxes and an unexpectedly low growth rate will mean a huge savings effort during 1997 to meet the Maastricht target.

As the government has already been forced to restrict social security costs by raising extra levies and cutting health care and pensions, the most probable area of saving

will be the public sector wage bill and state-owned services like the railways. At the same time, Mr Juppé is under pressure to reduce employers' fixed social security charges in the hope of stimulating investment to create jobs.

But after the public sector strikes which brought public transport and other services to a standstill last autumn, the prime minister has to consider the effect of new protests on the government's shaky popularity.

The failure by trade unions to stage a joint May Day demonstration may have encouraged Mr Juppé's advisors to believe that worker unity shown last autumn will be difficult to revive.

But the Communist-led CGT managed to assemble 30,000 marchers for

their Paris May Day demonstration and organise about 100 other protests elsewhere.

Mr Juppé also faces opposition to closer European political ties from some leaders of the Gaullist RPR movement who narrowly failed to overthrow the Maastricht treaty in the 1992 referendum.

Under the Maastricht treaty, European Union countries that want to be part of a single currency by January 1, 1999, must have a budget deficit of less than 3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) next year.

France's budget deficit equalled 5 per cent of GDP in 1995. The government has pledged to reduce the gap to 4 per cent in 1996, but that may be optimistic given the weakness of the economy.



Alain Juppé: Running the risk of causing more strikes



Back in business... Admiral Viktor Patrushev stands in front of one of his vessels in Portsmouth yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

Refurbished navy makes presence felt

David Fairhall meets a Russian admiral anxious to calm Nato fears about his fleet

RUSSIA'S navy is back in business on the high seas — but on a much reduced scale, and as a potential ally of the West.

This was the signal metaphorically hoisted at Portsmouth yesterday by Admiral Viktor Patrushev, Russia's deputy chief of staff, as he sought to calm unease in Nato about the reappearance of his navy's hunter-killer submarines in the North Atlantic, once again lurking off British and American naval bases.

"The Atlantic is an open ocean for everybody," Adm Patrushev said, with a hint of the defiance with which Soviet admirals once challenged the supremacy of the United States navy.

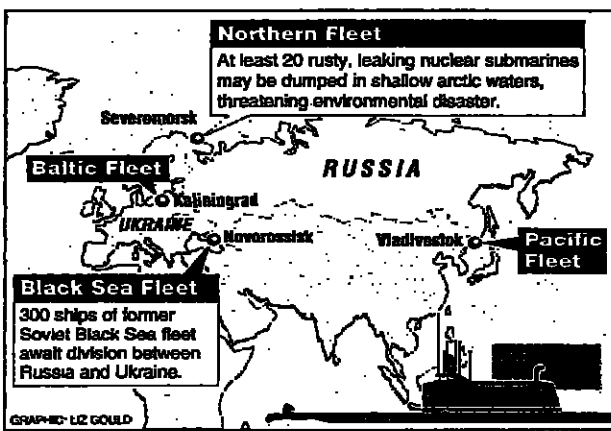
But the admiral went on to outline plans for smaller naval forces initially dedicated to coastal defence and eager to co-operate with Nato on United Nations peacekeeping operations.

attempting to run a UN blockade. Asked if the navy now being reassembled from the wreckage of the vast Soviet fleet intends to establish a worldwide presence, the admiral said that was not a current objective.

"Russia will not have such a large fleet as in Soviet times," he said, through an interpreter.

In the first instance, the fleet would be devoted to defending Russia's national interests in adjacent waters. As for the submarines recently discovered patrolling the British and US coasts, as well as the deployment in the Mediterranean earlier this year of the 67,000-ton aircraft-carrier Admiral Kuznetsov, the admiral said that all navies needed to train in the open sea, and to show the flag in traditional fashion.

However, after five years during which the main threat posed by the Russian navy seemed to be radioactive leakage from rusting nuclear hulks dumped in the Arctic, the detection last summer of a Russian submarine in the approaches to the US navy's Atlantic naval bases started



alarm bells ringing once again.

What worries Nato intelligence is the stealthy nature of the Russian visit — probably by one of the latest ultra-quiet Akula-class boats.

In February, a Russian Victor III submarine secretly shadowing a Nato exercise off north-west Scotland suddenly surfaced to call for medical assistance — something its captain would have been extremely reluctant to do in cold war days.

At least 20 rusty, leaking nuclear submarines may be dumped in shallow arctic waters, threatening environmental disaster.

From tight-fisted national treasuries. And Nato submarines undoubtedly still pay occasional covert visits to naval exercises off Murmansk, just as the Russians are yet to be divided between Russia and Ukraine.

But the fact that the Russians — for all their financial problems — are still building a new submarine every nine months suggests they intend to maintain a powerful underwater force as the cutting edge of their future naval power.

Britain and the US are building none. The Russians have also salvaged the Admiral Kuznetsov, one of the three big aircraft-carriers which sym-

bolised the global challenge mounted by Admiral Sergei Gorskov, father of the Soviet navy.

This year, Russia celebrates the 300th anniversary of its navy, which was founded in the Baltic by Peter the Great. In its heyday in the 1980s, there were sometimes more Soviet ships patrolling the world's strategic sea lanes than there were Americans.

Now, judging from Adm Patrushev's account, the cycle is quietly beginning again. If so, his service faces horrendous problems caused by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of its economy.

There are reports that at least 20 of them may simply be dumped in the shallow Barents Sea, where sooner or later their nuclear fuel could leach out to contaminate the fragile Arctic environment.

Yeltsin plans to visit Chechnia before election

PRESIDENT Yeltsin told a local television station yesterday that he planned to visit Chechnia in mid-May and was prepared to meet rebel separatists, the Interfax news agency said.

"Russian President Boris Yeltsin confirmed his intention to go to the Chechen republic in mid-May," the agency said.

The report confirmed suggestions that Mr Yeltsin could make his first trip to Chechnia before the presidential election on June 16. The president was quoted as saying: "Firstly, I have to thank the servicemen who have done a big job there, secondly to meet the elders, and thirdly give a boost to talks."

The new Chechen rebel leader, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, said on Wednesday he was ready for talks with Moscow — if Russian troops were withdrawn.

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Britain rules the bytes

Moral: if you can't make computers, use them

PEOPLE in Britain have become so used to being told that they are among the least numerate and most under-educated inhabitants of the industrialised world that when they hear what sounds like a compliment the immediate reaction is to think that something has gone wrong. That is why the initial reaction to an Olivetti survey — showing Britain having more home computers per household than any other major country — was sceptical. Surely anything suggesting the UK has more computers proportionately than the US, a nation synonymous with the information highway, must be wrong; and if it isn't wrong then it must be conveying an undercurrent of bad news (like our children spending too much time playing computer games).

In fact, the statistics seem to be legitimate. Earlier US figures showing higher computer penetration were found to have been inflated by products like games consoles which aren't kosher computers. According to the new survey almost a third of UK homes have a personal computer compared with 15 per cent in the US. Holland comes second with 31 per cent. The home computer in Britain is used for between 10 and 12 hours a week. Although 84 per cent of usage is for games this is not necessarily wasted time. Some games are overtly educational (like city-building and simulators) while others build computer literacy and keyboard fluency which is translatable into other activities.

Why has Britain become the world leader? Step forward an unlikely heroine: Mrs Thatcher. It was the uncharacteristically interventionist Conservative government of the early 1980s which financed a computer for every secondary school while the BBC invited tenders for the construction of a state-of-the-art computer to spearhead Britain's technological advance. Acorn

(later swallowed by Olivetti) won the competition with a computer way ahead of its time which enjoyed well deserved success for a number of years (and is still with us). Sir Clive Sinclair's company — the first to produce a computer costing under £100 — briefly became the biggest producer of computers in the world. At that time Britain sported a cluster of computer companies any one of which (had they been in America) could have evolved into a major international company. It was not to be. We spread our resources too thinly among too many incompatible machines and a great corporate opportunity was lost.

The consolation prize was the spawning of a new generation of computer-literate kids badgering their parents to buy one for the home. Although computers in schools suffered from the Government's myopic financial retrenchment, the thirst for computers remained. There is about to be another leap forward now that Labour, the Conservatives, BT and most of the cable companies are vying with each other to provide schools with cut price computers and access to the Internet. Make no mistake: computers will revolutionise education. Last week Dade in greater Miami announced plans to provide children with free on-line computers at home because it was cheaper than building extra classrooms. In Singapore pupils at home linked to "virtual" libraries will soon send their work in by telephone line to the school computer which automatically marks it and sends it back. Britain is well placed to be among the leaders as long as the Government realises, as it did in the early 1980s, that it has a pivotal role: both in making resources available and in ensuring that access to the new world is open to poor and rich alike. That is what the information revolution is all about.

The war they left behind them

Afghanistan needs rebuilding, not lectures from the West

AFGHANISTAN is a problem left over from history — recent history perhaps, but these days we forget very quickly. The grim reports now being shown on BBC Newsnight should jog memories and consciences. They describe a war which no one hopes to win yet which no one knows how to stop. As with other regional conflicts left over by the superpowers, civilians suffer the worst. The first instalment showed the unbearable tale of a 17-year-old peasant woman crippled by a mine while she searched for firewood, well aware of the risk but needing the fuel. Kabul's population is at daily risk from random rocket attacks. They are mostly those too poor to flee, living without hope in a ruined city. If there were a UN index of human misery, Afghanistan would feature in the very top bracket.

The armed Taliban militia, which began as an Islamic student movement in the south of the country, marched early last year on Kabul proclaiming high ideals. It pledged to end the war, reopen schools and burn the poppy fields. For a brief moment there was hope — even among foreign observers — that it would negotiate peace with the rival mujaheddin who have devastated the country. Instead it opened up with its own guns on the capital in the bloodiest assault of the civil war. As the BBC will show tonight, it now controls the world's largest opium-growing area and has presided over a massive increase in production. There is evidence of covert support for the Taliban from

Pakistan's infamous Inter Services Intelligence — the very same ISI that funded the anti-Soviet mujaheddin which it is now fighting. There is no shortage of irony. Semi-secular Pakistan supports the ultra-fundamentalists: Shiite Iran backs the less extreme Kabul regime — because of the Sunni character of the Taliban. Ethnic divisions between Pashtoons and Tajiks complicate the picture.

Last month Washington launched what was called a rare diplomatic initiative to Kabul — like the faltering UN peace mission — it is a low-key effort. President Rabbani in Kabul says that the US should bring pressure on Pakistan to stop interfering. No doubt it should, but nothing will be achieved unless Afghanistan moves much higher on the international agenda. Absurdly, Kabul is lectured by the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO for not satisfying their monetary conditions for trade and aid. Instead Afghans of all factions should be assured that a peace deal will be accompanied by generous help for reconstruction. And the effort should be backed by high-level commitment at the Security Council. This makes good sense on grounds of self-interest alone: an unsettled Afghanistan will remain a source of drugs, gunrunners and regional tension. But above all it must be done to repay a debt: Western governments encouraged the Afghans to wage one civil war, then turned their backs when it led, inevitably, to another.

A bishop's home is his palace

But should such critics of inner city poverty live in opulence?

THE TEXT for today is taken from the gospel of St John chapter XIV, verse 1: "In my Father's house are many mansions". One of them, sadly, is proving a little controversial. The new Bishop of Chelmsford John Perry is reported to be reluctant to move into the outgoing bishop's residence, *Bishops Court*, consisting of six bedrooms, three bathrooms, staff accommodation, three acres and the only episcopal residence with its own swimming pool. The Bishop's objections are not that he considers such a place too opulent when the Church of England is losing members and feeling the effects of the £800 million book loss on its investments in the early 1990s. Nor are his objections rooted in a desire to move into more modest accommodation in keeping with the spirit of the Church's campaign against inner city poverty. In fact he wanted to move into an even smarter home in the middle of Chelmsford said

to be worth nearly twice as much as the present £450,000 *Bishops Court*.

There is a case for a geographical switch on operational grounds. Bishops should be near their flocks and they need enough accommodation to perform the civic, hospitable and religious duties required by their office. As a result of an economy drive by the Church Commissioners, new standards state that a bishop's house should have six bedrooms, a meeting room for 30 people and dining facilities for 12. What a shame that the spur for downsizing the residences of bishops was forced by economic necessity rather than volunteered through moral leadership. How much more effective bishops would be when they rightly castigatate governments for neglecting inner city poverty if they could discard their mansions and palaces and spend more time in the real world. As Chaucer observed, if gold rusts, what shall iron do?



Share Offer

If you would like a piece of the Great Primrose Hill Train Robbery Booze Action, send £10 in an unmarked envelope to: The Spiritual Allies of Sir George Young 66 The Blind Beggar, Mile End Rd, London E1

Persons needing advice should contact a professional adviser. Booze can come back up as well as go down. Theft may be illegal.

Letters to the Editor

All change on the sex front

WHEN the European Court granted a transsexual employment protection against discrimination based on sex (Report, May 1), there is no "scientific" definition of race of any kind, whether on the basis of Mendelian genetics or any other system of medical observation. Furthermore, IQ tests are specified for the measurement of problem-solving capacity, which is not the same as the broad concept understood by intelligence. IQ test results cannot be regarded as an empirical observation, such as the establishment of blood-group or body temperature. An IQ score includes a reflection of the motivation and enthusiasm of the tested individual — factors which can drastically affect the test result.

A hypothesis based on matching the vague notion of race to the tenuous one of intelligence is difficult to take seriously. Kevin Bannon, Augier Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.

OF COURSE it is highly likely that some races are genetically predisposed to higher IQs. But some races seem eminently better 100-metre distance runners than others. With such physical differences between races and genders, why shouldn't there also be mental differences? But if so, what's interesting about people? Pat Turner, Bathurst Gardens, London NW10 5JJ.

AS A transsexual, I am cautiously optimistic about the European Court ruling. However, broader legal and social issues need to be addressed if the interests of transsexuals are to receive equal consideration with what most people rightly expect. For example, a number of health authorities have removed sex-change operations from their list of NHS-funded operations on the grounds that they are cosmetic. This is a gross trivialisation of how transsexuals understand such procedures. Furthermore, while shifts in public perception have taken place, society seems still inclined to treat us as jokes or circus freaks fit primarily for sleazy, late-night TV. Name and address supplied.

Fit for a king
WHY is Graham Brown (Letters, April 29) surprised that we should be seeking a tutor with knowledge of menswear? We run a successful fashion design course. Let's all snigger at the back of the class. Truly, it is not lecturers in fashion design but the pseudo-sophisticated sneers of the likes of Mr Brown that undermine attempts to sustain serious vocational education. (Dr) Paul Barlow, University of Northumbria, Box 11E, Newcastle NE99 1YE.

The catalogue for the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis sale will not, as you say, generate profit for Sotheby's: all profits are going to the John F Kennedy Foundation. Henry Wyndham, Chairman, Sotheby's, 34-35 New Bond Street, London W1A 2AA.

EVERYBODY seems to have missed the most stunning revelation made by Prince Edward on his television programme. The prince tells us that, because of Edward VIII's abdication, the future George VI was "literally catapulted on to the throne". A truly glorious occasion. Simon-Peter Trimarco, 8 Kilburn Bridge, Kilburn High Road, London NW6 6HT.

A race with no winners

IN 23 years of classroom teaching and 11 years of research, I never met a child who achieved anything like his/her full potential. The limiting factors are largely social and have to do with opportunity, with family ambition, with motivation, and factors of this nature. I imagine that inner-city white and Afro-Caribbean children of poor families would be at the bottom of the pile. Until something more effective is done to ensure that all children, whatever their "intelligence", are helped to fulfil a greater proportion of what they can achieve, the whole discussion about relative intelligence of racial types is a sterile argument. (Dr) R A L Hinton, Research fellow in education, Loughborough University, Leics LE11 3TU.

MIGHT there be a genetic mechanism by which a person is more likely to acquire both the name "Steve" and a healthy disgust for such "scientific" arguments? Or is it simply that the "hard" scientific backgrounds of Steven Rosa, Steve Jones and Stephen Jay Gould have led to an understanding of genetics, evolution and the biological development of organisms that has been lost on Messrs Lynn, Murray, Brand et al? Nigel Longhurst, 1 Brookland Road, Parkgate, South Wirral L64 6SN.

IQ scientists who claim to discover racial IQ bias are blind to the obvious realities of multi-ethnic societies. People manifest many aspects of intelligence, mutable and developed as required to negotiate diverse environments. IQ flourishes in academic calm; EQ (emotional intelligence) operates thousands of times faster than IQ and is vital to reading moods, PQ, or physical intelligence, is faster again. Intelligence can only be measured relative to the frames of reference of observer and subject. Test Christopher Brand's IQ by leaving him waterless in the Kalahari — and measure his intelligence by his adaptive abilities compared to the local people. Noel Hodson, Brookside, Oxford OX3.

AM I paranoid or is it just that a certain section of the white population has always been afraid of a challenging and enterprising new generation of blacks competing at the highest level and showing that they could be as good or better than others? Khalifa Tinnam, Dalkeith Road, Edinburgh EH16.

HELEN Guldberg's defence of the racist Christopher Brand appears to consist in the fact that none of his students believe a word he is saying. Shouldn't he then be sacked for incompetence? That's what we're told in stores for thousands of "incompetent" teachers. Richard Duguid, Sandmere Road, London SW4.

WHAT has happened to Tony Blair's hair? We fawned over him as Bambl, but being lionised as the Lion King has gone to his head. Now it seems he's been persuaded he'd look better as Timin. Come on, Tony, shed your mane and your quiff: your boyish good looks are nothing to be ashamed of. All that needs brushing up is your policies. A M S Hinton-Wilson, Priory Cottage, Church View, Evercreech, Somerset BA4 6EX.

JOHN Prescott joining the middle class can, just about, accept. But Jimmy Knapp writing as James Knapp (Letters, May 2) is pushing the borders of middle-class socialism beyond belief. Joseph Lane, 355 Kennington Lane, London SE11.

A COUNTRY DIARY
NORTHUMBERLAND: With a bird enthusiasts' group, I have been busy in woodland checking nest-boxes for winter storm damage. In the forestry, on one estate alone, there are 60 boxes and 200 in the woods in the Dilston area. The boxes are primarily used by pied flycatchers, blue tits, great tits and redstarts and, occasionally, owls. I am especially pleased to see the great tits, for several seasons a while ago we found nestlings dying of starvation which, according to the forester, was due to the extermination of their natural food by insecticides and tree-spraying. Now, I am glad to say, there is a heartening stream of pit commuters in the woods although no longer in our garden. A tit's nest is a thick wad of tightly-woven mosses, dead grass, hair and feathers. A few boxes have been blown down or dislodged: it is the amateur's task to hump the ladders and nails, but we leave the sifting to the experts in the group. I inquired about squirrels, as uninvited tenants, but apparently our reds are not as

pushy as the greys. "Arboreal mice are the chief problem," said the leader. "We have to be careful to site the boxes away from branches. The mice predate the babies in the nests." An unusual term to use, this does not imply that the chicks are mesmerised by the mice — but that they are actively stolen. The nest boxes will be checked every five days, and after the first egg is laid the group keeps track of the clutch until they hatch. Then a ringer from the British Trust for Ornithology will fix rings with code numbers on the baby birds' legs. It sounded like a lot of disruption but I was assured that these little birds don't mind. "Pied flycatchers are especially tolerant, they don't even mind their chicks being handled." The group moves on to a new block: I stay until the wood settles down. Two redstarts dodge about among the roots of an oak tree, the cock — one of our summer visitors — on a thicket with excitement that he has found a home and a mate. VERONICA HEATH

MANE CHANCE
A quick look back in anger
AS A secondary-school music teacher of some 25 years' experience, I find myself often taken by correspondents such as Caroline Sullivan to the rock band Oasis (First night, April 29). I am no aficionado of popular culture, but if Ms Sullivan could control her concession just temporarily, she might come to understand the reasons for their success. Popular music, traditionally economical with musical content, has, over the past two decades, so often relied on visual and multi-tracked effects and tricks, almost eradicating musicality. Your correspondent is right to say that Oasis do not use those "special effects deemed *de rigueur*". Of course, "modern" "flashy" "rilly" is vital for any male rock star, but what Oasis offer in addition is a musical content a cut above the currency of recent times. It is my experience that teenagers derive considerable enjoyment from at least being able to effect themselves a musically complete performance of their idols' music. The key to the remarkable success of Oasis is in the songs. Kids can sing them, and they like it. L J Williamson, 56 Cope Bank, Smithills, Bolton BL1 6PL.

PATTEN'S PATTERN FOR HONG KONG
CHRISTINE Loh's article (Hong Kong SOS, April 24) is shrill and misleading. The replacement of the current chamber of the legislative council will inject an element of instability into the transfer of power, a circumstance both Britain and China aimed to avoid when, between 1984 and 1982, they agreed terms for Beijing's return to sovereignty. What derailed their hopes for a "through train", a LegCo which would continue through the handover, was action not by Beijing but by Britain, through Governor Chris Patten. The changes he introduced a few weeks after he assumed office were not "extremely modest electoral reforms", as Ms Loh describes them, but a radical gerrymandering of the constitutional system. Beijing warned repeatedly that all



How about one of those old Oasis songs we used to sing back in 1996?

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Diary
Matthew Norman

A FAX arrives from international playboy Andrew Neil, in announcing yesterday that the quest to find him a companion was over. It seems we were premature. "You are quite right to report..." (I pause to savour the startling novelty of such a phrase) "that Ms Kate Sissons spent the Friday before last in my bed. You omitted to mention that she slept alone." Andrew explains that when Ms Sissons, social editor of OKE magazine, crashed out in his bed after a soiree at his back-slash room, he repaired to the spare room — an act of chivalry such as his role model, Bertie Wooster, performed for Pauline Stoker. In between divulging details of his domestic life too intimate for comfort, and sending best wishes to my mother, he warns: "Ms Sissons is a litigious lady, and may well feel you have impugned her character." As if the suggestion that engaging in colts with Andrew could be a libel on reflection, we apologise unreservedly to Ms Sissons for any distress caused.

NOTHING, not even good news, can pierce the sunny good humour of Alastair Campbell. New Labour's very own Max Clifford, Emerging yesterday from seeing off Rupert Allason's libel writ, the one-time "Riviera Gigolo" (he used to arouse readers of Forum with his saucy scribbles) was adorable. When a colleague questioned his claim of complete vindication — a bit cheeky, this, when the judge described him as "less than completely open and frank" — he snapped that he knew the Guardian wanted Mr Allason to win. If it didn't sound like something from the pen of the Riviera Gigolo, I'd say he's so cute you could eat him.

RECENTLY returned from the Melbourne Flower Show, Terry Major-Ball sounds unworriedly most glum when I call. "I'm just a bit fed up," he confesses. "Things are a bit awkward in the political field and I'm conscious of not being able to help." Ah well. Terry says he found the Australia trip exhausting. "Emma the PR lady — a very striking brunette, a lovely young lady — took me out for dinner one evening, and I ended up going to sleep on her. No, no, not on top of her," he adds by way of clarification. "I mean I fell asleep at the table. I'm ashamed of myself. I must be getting old." And upon this sombre note, we say farewell.

MEANWHILE, the man Terry calls "young John" has a plan to make the streets safe by using electronic tagging devices on young thugs. Let us hope the technology has improved. A few years ago, Washington police became so sick of them going off by mistake that they gave up answering the alarms. Indeed, the death of one tag-wearer eluded them for several weeks, until two officers read about it in a Sunday newspaper. "We had to backdate his escape two or three weeks," said one officer at the time.

BRITISH GAS is in trouble again. It has upset Mrs Ruth Snell Rainbow Van Gogh, a customer in York, to whom it sent a letter beginning: "Dear Ms Snellrainbow-hallucinogenicexperience." With such vigour has she complained that the temp responsible has been sacked. "I strongly resent this implication which makes me appear some sort of druggie," she explains. "It is outrageous that it should be sent out on such an important document." Mrs Snell Rainbow Van Gogh, a former Labour councillor, does well to keep it in perspective but may have to watch her anarchic sense of fun in the future.

THE Diary is intrigued to learn of rocketing sales of salt blocks. No doubt the farmers will take care not to overfeed them to cattle, thus making the animals thirsty and certain to put on weight by drinking vast amounts of water. Coincidentally, EU compensation for slaughtered cows depends on their weight and is payable at the rate of one ecu per kilogram.



Double the trouble, double the riches

Commentary
Peter Preston

I HAD been looking for something to read at my younger daughter's wedding. She thought that a half-hour ceremony entirely in Catalan, as provided by the Jolly judge at Sitges registry office, would sit a little heavy on visiting British brains. (Though not really, because this judge made jokes and read his own love poetry as well as doing the formal bit.) So I took Penelope Farmer's new and brilliant book.

My family is full of twins. Our daughters are twins. My mother's sister and brother were twins. My sister married a twin. My brother married a twin. Such generality is virtual normality. Those of us who came solo into the world often seem almost the odd ones out.

Farmer has invented an entirely fresh literary form: the autobiography as anthology. Two: Or The Book Of Twins And Doubles, from Virago this month at £20, is essentially a memoir of her relationship with her dead sister Judith. When you are still living in such a relationship she writes: "It is as if to define or understand as the air you breathe — it is the air you breathe". When your twin dies "then you need, you must... separate; to confirm what it means to be an individual, single, by at last beginning to decipher the doubleness".

But such deciphering has no narrow theme or thesis to it. We may feel Penelope Farmer's pain. "Did my sister and I love each other? I'm afraid so. We might have found life much easier if we hadn't; for I don't think we liked each other very much, and even the love was profoundly suspicious." We may recoil from faith. "I'm afraid so. We might have found life much easier if we hadn't; for I don't think we liked each other very much, and even the love was profoundly suspicious." We may recoil from faith. "I'm afraid so. We might have found life much easier if we hadn't; for I don't think we liked each other very much, and even the love was profoundly suspicious."

It may be that the Foreign Secretary made his remarks about us in order to counter the reports that he had protested at the lack of clear leadership over beef and the U-turn last week over retaliation options.

Ken Clarke said: "A lot of Eurosceptics would like to detach us from the Continent with which our wellbeing is inextricably linked. It would be isolationist if we followed the more extreme views. It might not be isolationist in intent but isolationism might be the consequence."

But this is not a true reflection of our views. There is no hatred of the European Union in pointing out that we are an island and that, unlike the rest of Europe, we have been fortunate in not having been conquered for a thousand years. There is no loathing in pointing out that our self-governing institutions in this country have been rather successful. They do not deliver happiness or security and wealth to all. They have failed

maker. And you can (like Elizabeth Bryan) be hanging down to earth. "A child responds to discipline largely because he wants the love and respect of the person on whom he most depends. For most children that is the parent. But in the case of a twin the person whose respect and co-operation he most wants is by his side, egging him on to worse, and worse misdemeanours."

To live with twins is to live with constant self-doubt. Are they — identical, like my daughters — what Larousse calls "the same individual of whom two copies have been printed"? Or do they only seem to be alike? Can they be paraded as tiny blonde identical moppets by a proud

father? Or is that disastrous starry-eyed for the future? Farmer has an episode for every eventuality and, in so collating, comes near the complexity of truth. I knew that the undergrowth of relationships was thickly tangled. I sometimes fretted about the outside, I can barely begin to comprehend the wrench when, at 18, the girls together chose different universities and then, travelling in Asia, when one went on alone to Australia whilst the other picked Madrid. It was a severance of great courage.

It is not contempt for Europe that obliges us to smile at Rifkind's purported rejection of a federal supranational state. Surely the EU is a federal state, with a Supreme Court that tells parties to the constitution what they can or cannot do? Surely our inability to do anything effective over the beef crisis arises because we have given the federal state control of our British agriculture?

Pointing out self-evident truths is not an act of loathing. It is necessary, even charitable, so that a power-



Right wing of a different hue and cry

THE DECISION by Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland, not to fly the European flag from government buildings on Europe Day next week is arrogant as it is foolish. Who the hell does he think he is? The Gauleiter of Scotland?

Forsyth was not promoted to Cabinet rank on grounds of ability; he was kicked upstairs to keep him out of mischief on the backbenches chief on the ground, his natural home. His xenophobia is typical of the New Right within the Government and party, and stands in vivid contrast to Malcolm Rifkind's trust in the Conservative Party who, like Forsyth, blame the foreigner for everything from mad cows to the inclemency of our weather. Does he wish Britain to retaliate against Europe? If so, why not ban French wine, scent and cheeses?

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Oasis and Blair ... together! 'Nuff said



Bel Littlejohn

LOVE 'EM to pieces. Oasis, I mean. Five lads Gallagher and three others, all with their own different names — who, put together, make me wanna boogie. Managed to watch their gig last weekend at the Manchester City stadium, and what a great gig it turned out to be, with all of us singing our hearts out with the majestic Liam as he chanted that legendary Oasis chorus, with its sublimated references to Shakespeare, John Donne and Virginia Woolf. "No, Sally can't wait! She knows it's too late! She's da di di da-di-di-y-y".

Magic. And what made the gig powerfully moving for me was that it was the lads saying a big Thank You to their fans in lovely, lovely Manchester. The city that nurtured their geniuses and gave them the courage to carry on when times were hard. And as a way of thanking the greatest fans in the world, Liam and Noel took no more than £17.50 a head from each of them, just to cover their hotel and travelling expenses, etc. In return they sang their hearts out on a stage no more than a hundred yards away for well over an hour. Charging less than £20 for most tickets, apart from those which gave a view of the stage, was their way of thanking the working-class youth of Manchester for making them into the millionaires they are today. Cheers, Manchester!

Youth culture. That's where the action is, and I'm proud to write for a newspaper that gives it the attention it deserves. Incidentally, the Guardian also springs from Manchester — snap! — and at the moment I'm gathering a group of Guardian writers to play a "thank-you" City stadium gig, with Bea Campbell, Pete Preston, Suzanne Moore and yours truly singing our guts out to some classic Hugo Young tracks such as Whither The SDP (1987), A Future For The ERM (1992) and — my all-time favourite — Setbacks In Store For Thatcher? (1983). 'Nuff said.

There's so much energy and sheer unabashed, unadulterated vitality in youth culture. The young have got so much to say, so please, please, please let's listen to 'em. Janet Street-Porter, for instance: I'm always interested in what she's got to say; Vivienne Westwood ditto; and I've also got one helluva lot of time for Jimmy Saville. They're all remarkable role-models for young people. We in New Labour are desperate to channel some of this

vitality to ram us home to victory at the next election. Obviously, to have Oasis on board will be a tremendous feather in our cap, sending out a message to young people like Janet and Vivienne that we really do care about the very real issues that affect the young people of today, such as clothes, continental lager and "rap" music.

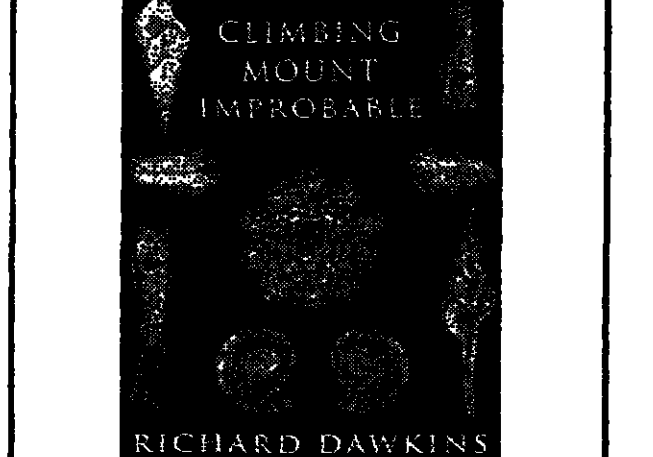
With this in mind, I was proud to take a Youth Delegation from New Labour to watch the Oasis concert from a special VIP room backstage, well away from all the noise. Obviously, the ever-youthful Jack Straw was on our list. Jack specially changed into his tie-dye T-shirt and orange crushed velvet lions with 12-inch flares for the occasion. Harriet Harman and the lovely Clare Short were also on board, though I had to have a quiet word in Clare's ear about joining in the choruses — some of the band's more controversial lyrics. Finally, the much-maligned Peter Mandelson was with us, keen as mustard to persuade the lads into plugging New Labour's plans for a Stakeholder Society in one of the show-stopping choruses. "Oh, Stakeholder Society, can't wait! She says it's too late! She's da di di da-di-di-y-y".

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CLIMBING MOUNT IMPROBABLE
Richard Dawkins
The approach is exhilarating — a perfect, elegant riposte to a great deal of fuzzy thinking about natural selection and evolution... intellectually uncompromising and immensely entertaining!
Robin McKie, Observer
'He has contributed to science, and not just to the public understanding of science, by saying clearly and simply things that the rest of us had seen as in a glass, darkly'
John Maynard Smith, Sunday Times
'Like David Attenborough he ranges widely, radiates enthusiasm, and all the while steadily builds up a cumulative case... once again entertaining and persuasive'
Don Cupitt, Evening Standard
'A beautiful, barnstorming thunderclap of a book... a book written by an evangelist of science at the height of his powers'
Michael White, Mail on Sunday

Lord Houghton of Sowerby

Helmshman in stormy times

DOUGLAS Houghton, who has died aged 97, was one of the few survivors in parliament of the first world war — an experience which shaped much of his later thinking and concerns. He looked the most unlikely man of war — short in stature and mild of expression. But this carapace of ordinariness disguised a most extraordinary man.

Not many people, unless they heard him speak in public or privately, would know of the fire in his belly. He wrote of the horrors he shared in Passchendaele, of "the futile months of agony and miserable death" from drowning off duckboards or from terrible wounding. Beside him in the trenches (15th Civil Service Rifles) was a young art student named Henry Moore. They remained friends for the rest of their lives.

After the war, Houghton returned to the Nottingham tax office which he had joined as a school-leaver of 16. But there his meticulous precision with facts and figures did not satisfy his passion for a more noble and fair post-war world. Trade unionism was his first step towards the better conditions and status of his fellow workers — taxmen being probably the most unloved of people.

He became secretary of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation. He was a member of the staff side of the Civil Service National Whitley Council and later a member of the General Council of the TUC. But he needed a more political dimension of activity towards his new Jerusalem. He became an London County Council alderman (1947-49), and I recall his forceful concern about the further education which he had been denied.

When the BBC gave him a regular programme called *Can I Help You?*, it was an in-

spired appointment. He was a sort of agony uncle, always sympathetic but always accurate, dealing in his resonant north country voice with the noughts and crosses of taxation, social security, local government, matrimonial legislation and much else. His was a rare combination of heart and head.

In 1949 he joined the House of Commons as MP for Sowerby, in Yorkshire — a part of the country he loved. Soon after he was appointed Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. Who better than a tax professional?

Then on to the ill-defined post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster where he spent most of his time trying to sort out the social and financial impact of the post-Beveridge legislation — problems still not solved. He often spoke and wrote about these matters, notably in a reprinted lecture to the Institute of Economic Affairs on *Paying For The Social Services* (1968).

He looked for a closer interaction between income tax and social security. He daringly suggested an equal retirement age for men and women (as had existed before the war) though he realised the political difficulties in those days. But he told me, the problem of dealing sensibly with those still intractable questions was that the Treasury mandarins learnt back on "administrative difficulties" which only he regarded as "not insurmountable".

We survivors of the Wilson leadership will remember the turbulent times when Houghton was chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party (1967-70). He had to preside over nasty, often spiteful, weekly meetings during the "Wilson must go" plotting. Houghton was totally loyal to Wilson over the leadership. He was told by the "enemies

that they had a list of 120 MPs on their side and wanted a vote on this. Somehow their resolution was never put — partly because, as Douglas told me, their numbers dwindled to 40 and they couldn't decide among themselves which of their diverse comrades should challenge Wilson. The fading away of threats to Wilson were also in no small degree due to the respected authority and statesmanship of the chairman.

I once rashly asked Douglas for names of the "Guy Fawkes" gang. He said: "They know who they are. And I have got them written down. But you won't know 'em 'ave you." There spoke the reticent tax collector with his straitjacket of confidentiality. But I do know and I don't care. Most of them are dead or are in the Lib Dems, indistinguishable fates.

He had a stormy time — sometimes criticised for ambivalence, which he described as "impartial fairness". But, of course, the chairman does not only function at weekly meetings and his patient influence was manifest all the time.

But then in 1969 came the bombshell of *In Place Of Strife* — another torment for the chairman and many others. The old trade unionist was bitterly opposed to the proposals. He remained personally loyal to Wilson but honestly thought he had made a disastrous mistake. Houghton considered that the rejection of *In Place Of Strife* was far more important than leadership intrigues, and it was only on this issue that he differed from Wilson. He said at a P.L.P. meeting on May 7 that "no good that a contentious bill of this nature might do to the economy could possibly outweigh the harm we can do to our government by the disintegration or defeat of the Labour Party." This was a



devastating pronouncement for the supporters of Wilson's proposals and the uproar sounded and resounded for several days — especially in cabinet to say nothing of the Tea Rooms.

These were difficult days for everybody involved. The divisions were not as clear as in the Gaitskell-Bevan rows. Even the richest, most wizard capitalist in the Cabinet (Harold Lever) suggested it should have been called in *Chase Of Strife*. Houghton's power behind the throne (whether to topple or prop-up) was perhaps best revealed when Wilson sent a cable from Lagos to Fred Peart, MP. "Essential that you watch what Houghton does. Essential that

no party meeting or situation takes place in my absence." But Houghton was his own man — never an image-maker's synthetic creation, spun for TV. For instance, he was totally devoted to Gaitskell's anti-CND politics and was known to savage fellow trade unionists, especially Frank Cousins.

But on social problems he was with Tawney on equality, and in the jargon was far "left", more concerned with public good than personal extravagance. The old tax man seldom agreed with Labour's Treasury-dominated chancellors (as he thought them). But at least they knew he could do his sums.

In the House of Lords in recent years Lord Houghton of Sowerby seemed to some people to talk too much about animals. He was a vice-president of the RSPCA, but explained when he was questioned about his apparent preoccupation that he was against cruelty or deprivation of any living creature. He understood that improvements in animal life needed legislation and that meant bringing these problems into the parliamentary arena. There were limits on what voluntary bodies could do politically for fear of losing their charitable status.

I once asked Douglas why he spoke so often about animals. He replied "because nobody else does — or not often enough". This is becoming less true than it used to be. But he had the satisfaction of getting through legislation for the protection of badgers and supported the Wild Mammals Protection Bill. He opposed the Dangerous Dogs legislation moving many amendments to correct its faults, several of which he alone foresaw. There was no self-interest in this. Douglas didn't even have a dog.

The impression of a one-track mind was totally unfair and ignorant. All his parliamentary life he had been involved with a great diversity of issues. He made profound speeches on world population and development, the state financing of political parties,

Douglas Houghton... Loyal and eloquent supporter of Harold Wilson but always his own man. PHOTOGRAPH TOM BLAU

electoral reform. He worked among many others on the Royal Commission on Standards of Conduct in Public Life (1974-75). Maybe Lord Nolan and a few others should read its report.

One of Houghton's most memorable speeches was this old soldier's opposition (spoken always without notes) to the War Crimes Act. Many peers agreed that his contribution was especially influential in the Lord's vote against this Act.

Maybe his public recognition was much less than he deserved — partly because there is no adequate serious parliamentary reporting these days, and too much glibly "research writing".

He learned a great deal from his wise and devoted wife Vera, whom he married in 1938. She received a CBE in 1986 (a year after Douglas got his CBE). She was a distinguished pioneer in world-wide family planning and an expert on the intransigent problems of overpopulation and its human consequences.

Douglas shared her concern on a wide range of problems, including racial and sexual equality, the need for tolerance and understanding of homosexuality, of reform of the termination of pregnancy legislation.

Lord Houghton's last speech in the Lords on October 19, 1995, was characteristically on the Wild Mammals (Protection) bill. He said, "By any standards this is a notable occasion in your Lordship's House. It is a measure of wide public importance, having a bearing on social conditions and the attitude of mankind to the animal kingdom."

Emile Habibi

The man who stayed in Haifa

EMILE Habibi chose an epitaph that will capture the central fact of his 73 years: "Stayed in Haifa" is to be engraved on his tombstone, testimony to the accident that meant he spent his life as a Palestinian citizen of Israel and not, like so many of his contemporaries, as a refugee living in exile or under military occupation.

Born to a Christian family in the port city in 1923, Habibi will be remembered as one of the finest Arab writers of his generation and a consistent advocate of non-violence as the only solution to the conflict over his homeland.

Habibi was perfectly placed to illuminate the permanent duality of the 600,000 Palestinians who live as a minority in the Jewish state, and the painful tug of loyalties to compatriots in the West Bank and Gaza Strip — now the kernel of a future Palestinian state.

Such psychological and political complexities form the backdrop of his most memorable work. *Strange Events in the Disappearance of Said Abu al-Nahs al-Mutashael*. Al-Mutashael (a neologism) is the "pessimist" the comic-ironic Palestinian, who like Voltaire's Candide, finds in his repeated misadventures the best of all possible worlds.

Habibi's hero bumbles through the tragedy of his people — dispossessed in 1948,



torn between collaboration and defiance, robbed of heritage and land but always bouncing back in a landscape where, in one of his most powerful images, their shadows mix with the sun, and grow over time and distance.

As a young man, Habibi worked at a British-run oil refinery in Haifa Bay, where the struggle for workers' rights sometimes seemed more important than the gathering national conflict. By the second world war, he was a committed communist, loyal to the simple but then startling idea that the only way to solve the future of Palestine was by dividing it between two peoples, by recognising Jewish rights and demanding Arab ones too.

It was a logic that led him to the leadership of the Communist Party, writing a popular column in its newspaper, *Al-Itihad*, and serving as an MP for 19 years — part of a dramatic experience that still distinguishes Israel's Arabs from Arabs almost everywhere else. He left after other comrades refused to follow Gorbachev, preferring to concentrate on his writing, and his other great love — fishing.

Emile Habibi was at the centre of controversy when he became the first Arab writer ever to win the prestigious Israel Prize. His Palestinian critics argued that the award

Helene Cordet

Café society charmer

FRENCH women entertainers — Barriot, Caron, Signoret, Juliette Greco, Edwige Feuillère — were once and enviable in the 1950s to a Britain which merely had Diana Dors.

But the star who transplanted herself most shrewdly across the Channel to London's Mayfair, flourishing better here than at home, was Helene Cordet, who has died in Switzerland, aged 78, after two heart operations.

Today she is most remembered because of the hoary, persistent rumour that she was the mistress to the Duke of Edinburgh and secretly bore his son, Max. There was never a shred of hard evidence, and she and Max said "Certainly not!" The final truth — if any — is unlikely to emerge from Court papers for about 100 years, unless the tabloids strike lucky.

In the fifties and early sixties, however, with her exquisite heart-shaped face, happy voice, fine legs and flair for the camera, she was an innocent household name as hostess and cabaret star of the Middle Ages, modern journalistic idiom, ordinary speech and a wry humour into a distinctive style, a *Middle Eastern magic realism* which jumps from fantasy to reality and back again, blurring the boundaries between the two.

"The language is the hero in my novels," he told the Guardian at the time. "A writer who does not take care with his language is like a musician who does not know how to read a score; that is the difference between journalism and literature."

Habibi is survived by his wife and three children.



lan Black
Emile Habibi, writer, born August 29, 1922; died May 2, 1996

Helene Cordet, entertainer and nightclub owner, born July 3, 1917; died April 30, 1996

Birthdays

James Brown, singer, 63; Patsy Chapman, former editor, *News of the World*, 48; Betty Comden, playwright and screenwriter, 77; Kathy Cook, athlete, 36; Henry Cooper, boxer, 62; Ben Elton, comedian and writer, 37; Sir William Glock, pianist, music lecturer and critic, 88; Dr David Harrison, master, Selwyn College, Cambridge, 66; Mary Hopkin, singer, 48; John Lewis, jazz pianist, composer, 78; Prof Ruth Lister, social economist, 47; Eddie Loyden, Labour MP, 63; Sheila McKechnie, director, consumers' Association, 49; Sir Christopher MacRae, High Commissioner to Pakistan, 58; Randle Manwarling, poet, 84; Véronique Nicholson, fashion designer, 42; Peter Oosterhuis, golfer, 47; Edwin Russell, sculptor, 57; Pete Seeger, folk singer, 77; Norbert Singer, vice-chancellor, University of Greenwich, 65; Norman Fostell, illustrator, 73; Sandi Toksvik, comedian and writer, 38; Allan Wells, Olympic sprinter, 44.

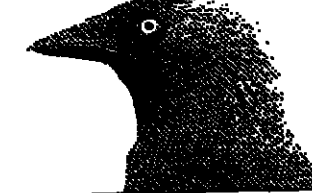
Death Notices

Houghton, Douglas, Lord Houghton of Sowerby, PC, CB, died 2nd May in his 97th year. Burial on 7 May at 2pm at West Norwood Crematorium, Norwood Road, London SE27. No flowers please. Enquiries to Allan Wiley, 0171-876-8124.

SWANSON, Douglas Chester died 29/4/96. Educational management man, generous much loved father, friend and colleague. Much missed already. Funeral at 2.30 on Saturday 4th May, at Heywood Baptist Church, Heywood, Enquiries to Hill & Sons 01496 73267.

Deaths of persons mentioned in telephone 0171 713 4567. Fax 0171 713 4126.

Jackdaw



Men theory

WATCHING my sister develop, however, has not elicited the same types of wondrous feelings I once had as a boy. As a matter of fact, it has been a terrifying experience. Now I want to turn my head when she goes swif and because I can't stand the thought of my eyes doing what they normally do when I see a girl in a bathing suit. When I give her hugs, I'm afraid to hold her too close (now I understand why girls give "girl hugs"). I get suspicious when her phone rings because I don't want it to be a guy. I say to her, "If a guy ever touches you I when you

start dating in 20 years), I'll tear him apart very slowly." What happened during this past decade that transformed me into the over-protective jerk that I despised in elementary and junior high school? I guess you could say that the shoe is on the other foot — in a big way.

With these dilemmas, I thought I was in pretty bad shape. Then I looked at my dad and saw that I was not alone in my misery. I see him having the time of his life coping with the harsh reality that Charmaine, now 13, is seeing boys. I can't really imagine what it is like for him to see and fear teenage boys like us every day. Talk about over-protective fathers... Let's just say that I would not want to be the guy dating my dad's honey-plee. I thought I was tough but seeing my father's wrath has given me a new respect for all members of the female gender who have tolerated and withstood the onslaught of men — maybe boys — like us.

[...] The images, emotions and creative situations racing through the male mind

are not ones I would like to see associated with my sister. So I have come up with a theory as to why us men have this over-protective tendency — it's because we're men and over-protection is part of the code of being a male. Before you say that is a sexist cop-out, let me explain. I believe that men are scum. I do realize this and feel it is an eternal truth.

Derek Matso in "Words From the Crab" in *Talk magazine* grapples with his feelings for his "woman person in the world". Yolk is a "Generasian" magazine, that is a mag for Asian Americans.

End not nigh
FOR ALL its impressive scholarly detail, Julius's study is only the beginning of a long process of revisionist criticism which should diminish the overwhelming, stifling cultural authority which Eliot's oeuvre has acquired. I have been reading him for more than thirty years, and teaching him for more than twenty — his work seems endlessly subtle and intelligent, many of his cadences are perfect, but there is a malignity in it which is

terrifying. It's so firm and quiet, because like a true politician Eliot never apologises and he never explains.

Tom Fuxin in a long, thoughtful review of Anthony Julius's "T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form," in *The London Review of Books*, says of the other reviews of Julius's book: "They have been snifty and dismissive. Julius is a lawyer as well as a scholar. He is currently writing for the *Princess of Wales* in her divorce.

Countdown
THE "millennium problem" has amused computer buffs for years. *Wall Street* reports *Barron's* has twigged that millions of dollars can be made from it.

The problem involves the way dates are expressed in mainframe computers that remain in widespread use by insurance companies, banks, securities firms and other big outfits. When these systems were designed in the 1960s and 1970s, years were expressed using only two digits, not four, because memory was costly, and because programmers

didn't dream the system would last to 2000.

As 1999 changes to 2000 these systems will become confused and think the new year is really 1900, with potentially disastrous results. A person born in 1925 could go from being 74 in 1999 to minus 25 in 2000. In some cases, computers would strip away the minus sign and conclude that the person is 25.

Automatic tellers could stop working and drivers' licences and insurance policies could be cancelled because computer systems would think people haven't been born yet. A phone call that carries over into 2000 could generate a bill for 98 years [...]. "This may not be computer Armageddon, but everyone I've spoken to says the problem is real," says Paul Gillin, editor of *Computer World*.

Excuse me
The following is a collection of "actual excuse notes from parents (including spelling)" from the Office of Educational Assessment at the University of Washington:

Please excuse Gloria from Jim today. She is administering. Dear School: Please excuse John being absent on Jan. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and also 38.

Please excuse Jimmy for being. It was his father's fault. Please excuse Jennifer for missing school yesterday. We forgot to get the Sunday paper off the porch, and when we found it Monday, we thought it was Sunday.

My daughter was absent yesterday because she was tired. She spent a weekend with the Marines.

Jackdaw wants your jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4566; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Desmond Christy

Yolk... sibling problems

Yolk... sibling problems

Yolk... sibling problems

Yolk... sibling problems

Yolk... sibling problems

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

FinanceGuardian

City braced for selling wave after telecoms talks collapse and Government blocks power predators

BT pricks merger bubble

Lisa Buckingham, Paul Murphy and Chris Barrie

FEARS rose last night in the City that the "merger-mania" bubble, which has kept the London stock market at record highs over recent weeks, has burst following the planned £33 billion merger between British Telecom and Cable & Wireless has been scrapped. The news came on the heels of the Government's statement that it would retain its "golden shares" in the two main electricity generating

companies, National Power and PowerGen — effectively blocking potential bids by US predators. The City was already braced for a bout of political slitters following last night's local election results, but analysts were also quick to point out that US employment figures — due to be published later today — could also sour market sentiment. "There are a lot of negative factors to deal with here," one senior dealer said. "The stock market has been looking nervous all week and this could be the trigger for some wholesale selling." The FTSE 100 index of top

companies closed almost 30 points lower at 3776.4 even before the announcement from BT. After-hours dealings on the futures exchange suggested this key indicator could fall another 50 points first thing this morning. BT and C&W shares were expected to lead the fall in stocks after news of the collapsed merger talks stunned investors last night. A merger would have created an international telecoms group with sales of more than £20 billion a year and 180,000 employees. It was BT's second attempt to net C&W and create a global combine valued at around £33 billion.

BT shares were already 8p off yesterday at 352p, while C&W shares had risen 3p to 54p. In New York, traders reacted by slashing prices, with BT falling the equivalent of 5p and C&W the equivalent of 53p. One analyst forecast that C&W shares would fall more sharply than BT shares in London because its price included greater expectation of a successful outcome. There were also some predictions, however, that C&W shares would be supported by BT specialists now that the BT talks had collapsed. One fund manager said the collapse of the talks was "an

embarrassing setback". Another said: "This is really bad news. C&W is now definitely in play [as a takeover target] and the pressure on BT to do something" is bound to intensify. An analyst predicted that angry institutional investors would "nudge" BT towards rewarding shareholders for their patience throughout the talks with some form of special package. BT sought to soften the blow by indicating it would work with C&W subsidiaries and would look for alliances in the Far East such as KDD, Telstra and Korea Telecom. But some shareholders were

quick to point the finger of blame at BT's senior executives. One substantial shareholder in both companies said: "The fact that BT has failed to deliver again doesn't say much very positive about its management. If they now just come out with a load of platitudes rather than a well thought-out plan for the future without C&W, I think they will come under pressure." "In these circumstances it would be too much to have one share in both companies; unfortunately most of us have got an awful lot more than that."

Lost connection irks phone firms



Edited by Mark Milner

LADY Thatcher once described the then Cabinet minister Lord Young, the former Cable & Wireless chairman, as a man who brought her solutions, not problems. Unfortunately, over the five months C&W and BT have been discussing an alliance they saw as a solution to a number of issues, all they found were problems. But in failing to solve the complex difficulties standing in the way of a merger, C&W and BT have effectively created another problem. What do they do now? In agreeing to talks with BT, C&W may well be regarded as having put itself in play — though the balance of risk and reward which is said to have cooled BT's ardour could similarly influence other potential partners or predators. BT now has to look at alternative ways of plugging the gaps in its coverage, not least in Asia, that C&W would have filled so neatly.

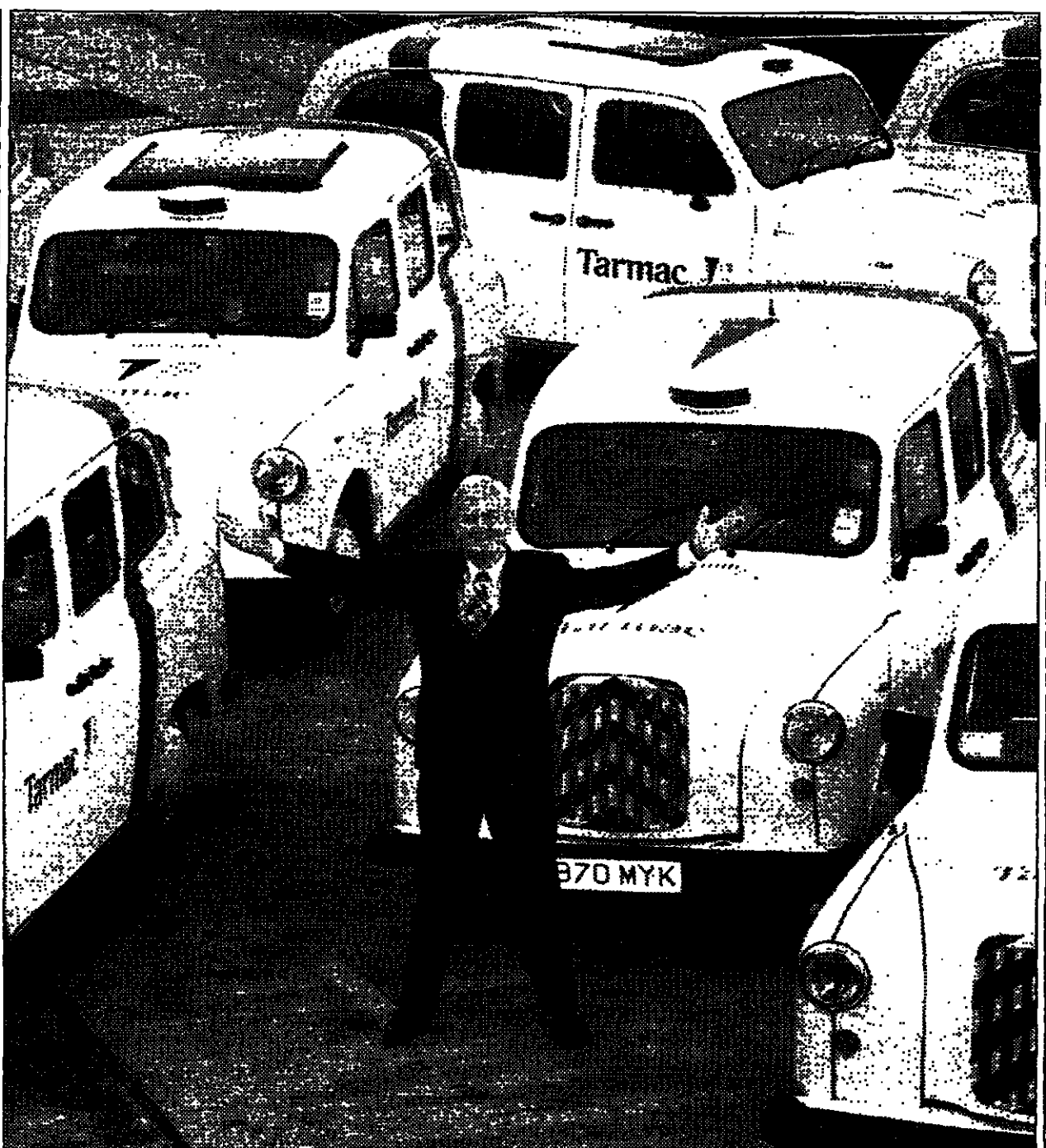
Its intentions clear. Earlier this week, Mr Brown said money would have to be saved before it could be spent. This is wise, both politically and economically. The Wilson and Callaghan governments in the sixties and seventies found to their cost that playing fast and loose with the public finances in the first two years of the electoral cycle meant tightening fiscal policy in the second half of a parliament. As the deficits of 1970 and 1972 showed, it was a bad strategy. The economic case is equally persuasive. The financial markets will react badly if the deficit starts to rise sharply. Bond yields will be forced up, a trap door will open under sterling. In addition, the peculiar shape of the British economy means that a policy constructed around fiscal laxity will almost certainly lead to the familiar problems of under-capacity, balance of payments deficits and overheating. Unpopular it may have been, but the combination of loose monetary policy and tight fiscal policy in recent years has been good for Britain, making exports and investment cheaper while keeping the lid on spending. That formula should not be abandoned.

Mines sell-off opens pension fund coffers

David Hencke Westminster Correspondent

THE Government is to receive a £2 billion windfall — equivalent to a 1p cut in income tax — from taking over responsibility for British Coal's pension fund. The fund is heading for a £1 billion surplus which will be split equally between enhanced pensions for miners and white-collar staff, and the Treasury, the National Audit Office says in a report today on British Coal's privatisation. The cash — which is identified in an analysis by accountants Binder Hamlyn for the NAO and agreed with the government's Actuary — will come too late to help Chancellor Kenneth Clarke with the next Budget. The report says 10 payments — worth £200 million each — are to be made to the Treasury over the next 25 years. Any additional money

will go to the Government when the fund is wound up. The auditors are critical of cost overruns incurred by the appointment of privatisation advisers and of an agreement to pay a success fee of £2.5 million to the merchant bank Rothschilds, the main adviser, half-way through its four years' work. Among the biggest payments for advisers was £12.7 million to Clifford Chance for legal advice. During one year, 1994, fees to legal advisers exceeded their budget by 86 per cent. Other budget overruns included 748 per cent on mining consultants and 438 per cent on environment consultants. The auditors criticise the ministry for appointing Rothschilds without making detailed comparisons with other shortlisted bidders. Rothschilds received a total of £9.1 million for its work. Another £4.3 million went to accountants Touche Ross. The NAO criticises civil servants' handling of the £37 million bill for privatisation advisers. The auditors say the DTT's coal privatisation unit was unaware that the ministry's Insolvency Service was investigating Tony Budge, chief executive of RJB Mining, which paid £215 million for the bulk of British Coal. The inquiry into whether Mr Budge should be disqualified as a company director after his previous company went into administrative receivership eventually cleared him. But the auditors note that "any action to apply for a disqualification order against him could have had a significant impact on the RJB Mining bid".



Coal's Chief executive Neville Simms launches Tarmac's new corporate logo, replacing the 'brick wall' of Ts used since 1984. The reflective green and white T on a yellow background took identity consultants Sampson Tyrrell 18 months' work

Lang pulls plug on takeover binge

SIMON BEAVIS on belated moves to block the generation game

THE Government tried to call a belated halt yesterday to the takeover binge that has overtaken the electricity sector in the run-up to the general election, by effectively blocking politically embarrassing bids for the generators, National Power and PowerGen. In a move which caused derision in the industry and the City, Trade Secretary Ian Lang said that Government would retain golden shares in the generators which prevent any outside investors owning more than a 15 per cent stake. He said the decision would hold until the Government was confident that the electricity market had become competitive enough — a broad aim that it would wait until the liberalisation of the domestic power market in 1998 or after the election next year. The DTT said the Government thought it should retain the golden shares in view of the importance of the two companies as independent generating companies. But it added: "As and when the Government is satisfied that there is adequate competition in the generation and supply markets it will be prepared to consider whether to redeem the special shares." The announcement — which now moves bid speculation back to the six regional electricity companies — has not yet taken over — sent industry shares into a tailspin for the second time in a week, following last week's announcement by Mr Lang that he was blocking bids by National Power and PowerGen for two regional companies. One industry observer said: "Privatisation was supposed to stop political interference but in the last week it seems to have come back at a rate of knots." The move to block the bids was widely seen as a political attempt to quell protests on the Tory right at the generators' growing monopoly powers. It was also seen as a direct nod to the Southern Company of Atlanta, Georgia, that the US group's expressions of interest in bidding for National Power were unwelcome. Earlier this week National Power was forced to go to the Takeover Panel to declare its intentions after the US firm took delivery of the National full share register at the weekend. National repeated the call last night as it disclosed it was reviewing its dividend policy and capital structure.

Who's sending the letter bombs?

Sarah Whitebloom casts anxious glances at others attending the Barclays funfest

THERE are only so many things that can be hidden in a handbag. Nevertheless, shareholders at Barclays' annual meeting yesterday faced having their handbags searched as many as three times by legions of security guards, private security consultants and bank staff acting as bag inspectors. With such enthusiastic assistance on hand, the police — yes the Met was there too — appeared somewhat lost for custom and confined themselves to honour-guard duties outside the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre in Westminster. Although the security arrangements would put President Clinton's CIA entourage to shame, they were not designed to protect a head of state who happens to have a few Barclays shares. In the wake of threats from the so-called Mardi Gras bomber — who has sent Bar- — yes the Met was there too — appeared somewhat lost for custom and confined themselves to honour-guard duties

was taking no chances. And no one at the meeting was objecting. If the bomber is — as many believe — an extremely disgruntled Barclays customer, he may well have decided to make his mark alongside the numerous protesters who have become a feature of the bank's annual meetings. The only people prepared to make a "joke" about the threat was the pressure group Safe (Struggle Against Financial Exploitation). Demonstrators donned plastic second world war-style helmets and accused Barclays of sending hundreds of "devastating letter bombs" to its small business customers. The organisation claimed the bank's "war of attrition" against its customers had given rise to the Mardi Gras bomber. For once, however, Safe's antics and accusations were overshadowed. For all anyone at the meeting knew, they were sitting next to the bomber. No one mentioned the ugly word. But there was a sharp intake of breath when an investor asked whether Barclays planned to compensate the aggrieved customers on the list it has given the police of people who may have a grudge against it. Mr Buxton moved on swiftly to the next disgruntled customer.

Guru takes a £19m pay cut

Patrick Donovan City Editor

CITY investment guru Crispin Odey has lost his ranking as the third highest paid person in Britain after taking a salary cut of more than £19 million. The 37-year-old's earnings have fallen from £19,266,000 to a paltry £171,000 after his Odey Asset Management company made a loss, according to latest accounts lodged with Companies House. City-based Odey Asset Management, which employs 15 people, saw last year's £301,000 profit turn into a loss of £39,000 to November 30. But the downturn will inevitably damage Harrow and Oxford-educated Mr Odey's reputation as one of the City's leading investors. Last year's results saw Mr Odey's earnings top those of people like rock musicians Elton John and Eric Clapton. Within the high-pay stakes he was bettered only by singer Phil Collins and the Formula One racing promoter Bernie Ecclestone. The company papers forecast a "better performance" during the current year on Odey's funds under management which total £316 million, around half the amount he had available for investment three years ago. According to the accounts, three directors have resigned

during the financial year but no detailed information is given about the investment activities, beyond confirmation that they are regulated by Imro and are related to the management of funds within Europe. Odey's financial results, however, will further underline problems confronting specialist "hedge funds". His big investors are believed to include fund managers like Hermitage and Global Asset Management. Funds such as Odey are vehicles which rely on leveraging up sums for investment many times over with sophisticated financial instruments. They are widely used for individual investments of

amounts ranging from £15,000 to £2 million. Mr Odey is perhaps the best known hedge fund manager in the City but others, such as Wall Street's George Soros or Julian Robertson of Tiger, are internationally acclaimed figures. The reputation of the hedge fund industry has suffered problems recovering from the 1994 market falls when they were largely blamed for the selling deluge. Typically hedge funds charge a 1 per cent management fee and a performance-based incentive of around 20 per cent of net profits each quarter. Most hedge funds would expect to generate returns of up to 80 per cent per year.

Body blow

BODY SHOP is an unusual company, which faces unusual difficulties in pursuing and promoting its values. But it also faces problems familiar to British retailers that have attempted to transplant their successful domestic formulae to the US. It is another country, you might say, they do things differently there. Yet too many businesses have assumed that because the language is similar the formula will work similarly. Body shop chairman Gordon Roddick admitted yesterday that the company had been naive in that belief. He now knows very well that life in US retailing is much tougher than in the UK, and that it will not be easy to reverse the alarming decline in store sales, the restoring the US operation to profit. The crucial question is whether Body Shop is actually offering anything unique, or even markedly different. And even if it is, whether it can persuade enough sceptical US shoppers that is the case. There are plenty of people in this country who believe they can get products in Boots, Marks & Spencer or even Sainsbury which are just as good and just as "natural" as the stuff they pay higher prices for at Body Shop. But the chain is sufficiently well established not to notice that challenge too much, and its green, animal-friendly values help to make a difference. In the US, it is still attempting to become established, and those values are much less well known. Hard times can therefore be expected to continue, financed increasingly by soaring profits from Japan and elsewhere in Asia.

Learn from Tories

LABOUR is in a hoping it is like this in a year's time. Seats won, the swingometer moving in its direction, the gates to Downing Street swinging open. But if that is the scenario when the general election comes, Labour's problems may only just be beginning. As the London Business School points out today, the putative Chancellor, Gordon Brown, could be faced with some tough fiscal decisions. Mr Brown is aware that every special interest group in the land will be seeking Treasury redress from 18 years of Conservative rule. He also knows that the budget deficit will be too high for comfort in the sixth year of economic recovery. Labour has already made

Old Lady's personnel chief quits as outsider experiment founders

Larry Elliott Economics Editor

THE Bank of England's experiment with an outside head of personnel ended abruptly yesterday with the news that Roy Lecky-Thompson is to leave after a troubled 18-month reign. Mr Lecky-Thompson was brought in by the former deputy governor, Rupert Pennant-Rea, at the end of 1994 to provide private-sector expertise on a five-year contract. Within three months of Mr Pennant-Rea had resigned under a cloud and the personnel chief never found favour with the Bank's hierarchy or staff, who were unhappy with job cuts and reorganisation. The new deputy governor, Howard Davies, has

been trying to restore battered morale at the Bank since arriving last autumn and is said to have had different views about the future direction of personnel policy. A Bank spokesman said that, in the light of discussions with Mr Davies, Mr Lecky-Thompson had decided "that it was in both his and the Bank's interests" to leave. It is understood the Bank was unhappy that its personnel strategy — a revamp of pay structures, job evaluations and career development — was not being pushed forward as actively as senior officials had hoped. When Mr Lecky-Thompson leaves at the end of June he will be replaced by a Bank insider, Mervyn Loshier, who is the deputy cashier at present.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 1.8175	France 2.4650	Naly 2.285	Singapore 2.0475
Austria 1.59	Germany 2.2175	Spain 0.475	South Africa 3.31
Belgium 45.50	Greece 3.5625	Netherlands 2.4650	Spain 184.00
Canada 1.6750	Hong Kong 11.24	New Zealand 2.11	Sweden 10.02
Cyprus 0.8865	India 51.65	Norway 9.58	Switzerland 1.750
Denmark 8.56	Ireland 0.9350	Portugal 228.50	Turkey 107.587
Finland 7.1650	Israel 4.78	Saudi Arabia 5.57	USA 1.4575

Supplied by Thomson Bank (excluding India) — source and British Bankers

Lobby group mines sarcastic vein of protest as it accuses RTZ of destroying Papuan tribesmen's ancient heritage

PROTESTERS drove a digger up to the headquarters of RTZ in St James Square, London yesterday to demand that the world's biggest mining firm stop investing in a mine in the Indonesian-occupied part of New Guinea.



Blair to face double whammy on tax

TONY Blair's New Labour, if elected to government, will be plunged straight into the dilemma of tax increases and interest rate rises by an economic mini-boom and weak public finances, a leading academic says today.

the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke's panel of independent advisers. In an article published by the London Business School, the director of the Centre for Economic Forecasting warns that Labour's chancellor is likely to be Gordon Brown — would face tough decisions on taxes and public spending.

year compared to a Budget forecast of £29 billion, believed to be due to lower-than-expected tax receipts. The Treasury is still investigating the shortfall in tax revenue which could cause further overshoots.

The General Election must be held by May 1997 and, the LBS forecasts, the UK economy will have strengthened considerably by then. It predicts a growth in national output of 4.2 per cent in 1997, compared with 2.4 per cent this year.

chester Business School that Labour would not be the party of high spending. He would look to shave money from the public finances through more efficiency cuts, following on from the Conservatives' drive to save and save again.

Labour's cautiously-framed plans for a national minimum wage, fearing the cost and pointing to the possible damage to employment. The LBS report says Labour would have to be careful not to trigger inflation.

promise the electorate higher spending without tax rises and claim that growth will be strong enough to lessen the impact on the public finances. That would raise doubts about Labour's commitment to controlling the public finances.

The honest route would be to hold down public spending, keeping to the kind of outlay that the Conservatives have made, creating the possibility of future relaxation of spending. Otherwise, the only option would be to bite the bullet and raise tax revenue in some way.

Rapid American growth rattles bond markets

ODDS on a summer rise in US interest rates shortened yesterday after Wall Street took fright at an unexpectedly strong surge in American growth in the first quarter of this year.

The White House was quick to crow about the latest figures. Laura Tyson, head of the National Economic Council, said that strong GDP growth was "more evidence of the president's economic strategy paying off".

spending, particularly for computer products, and in business investment. The bond market, always nervous at any sign of unsustainable growth, reacted negatively to yesterday's economic data.

which is now looking at Fed tightening, not at its next meeting this month, but possibly at its July meeting. Following weak economic growth in the final three months of last year, there was a flurry of concern that the economy might tip into recession.

product's 2.8 per cent growth rate in the first quarter was the strongest showing since a 3.6 per cent increase in the July-September period last year. In other signs of robust growth, orders to US factories rose 1.3 per cent in March.

Management said that its manufacturing index rose to 50.1 per cent last month, the first time since last July it has been above 50 per cent. While first quarter growth exceeded the Wall Street forecasts, most economists believe that the economy will slow down later in the year in response to the recent jump in long term interest rates and to anticipated Fed tightening.

News in brief

Body Shop bruised but still bountiful

BODY Shop's US operation slipped into loss last year and the company is struggling against tough competition which has eaten into sales, but yesterday the company, which recently abandoned plans to leave the stock market, pleased investors with a 55 per cent increase in the final dividend.

Vote out Tories and I'll come back, says Nadir

TONY MAY hears party benefactor look forward to a change of power

Conservatives, Mr Nadir said: "I never regret anything that I have done in my life. All I regret is having trusted the authorities." He was speaking during a five radio link-up between his office in Northern Cyprus and studios in London to help promote a book published this week by his former aide, Elizabeth Forsyth.



Fugitive... Nadir's only regret is 'having trusted authorities'

"I wanted to give evidence at Mrs Forsyth's trial by video link but was prevented. I could not return after seeing the way the authorities have behaved. "I am sorry about what happened to Mrs Forsyth. But I explained to her what would happen to her and it

Kwik Save goes back to basics after profits slide

DISCOUNT supermarket chain Kwik Save has begun a fundamental re-examination of its business after a slide in profits yesterday saw more than £60 million wiped off the company's stock market value. Chief executive Graeme Bowler said the six-month study would "challenge every aspect of our current operations".

Grid unabashed by HSBC

NATIONAL Grid last night said it was happy about a 12.5 per cent holding in its shares built up by HSBC James Capel in association with Saudi-controlled Olayan. It dropped a broad hint that it had accepted assurances by James Capel that the broker retains control over the shares, promising to issue a full statement shortly.

Ashley scents success

LAURA Ashley has teamed up with cosmetics company L'Oréal to introduce a range of perfumes and toiletries under the Laura Ashley name. As well as being available through the clothing and furnishing chain's shops, the products will be distributed worldwide by L'Oréal.

Hanson sells Seven Seas

HANSON has sold its Seven Seas vitamins business to German-based chemicals group Merck for £150 million. The British conglomerate acquired Seven Seas as part of its Imperial Group acquisition in 1988 and held on to the vitamins operation while most of the group was sold. It was said to remain a personal interest of chairman Lord Hanson, and is being sold in the clear-out before the group's four-way split later this year. The Hull-based unit had sales last year of £59 million.

Scottish Hydro steams south

SCOTTISH Hydro-Electric is to build a £26 million combined heat and power plant in Kent. The group said that it would own and operate the 52 megawatt plant, which will be located at the Smurfit Townsend Hook paper mill. The plant will take its investment commitment in combined heat and power plant to more than £100 million. The company said that the investment in the new plant would supply the mill's energy requirements in the form of electricity and steam for the next 20 years. It will also deliver about 30 MW to other customers.

£800m for Indosuez stake

FRNCH bank Credit Agricole said it was paying 6.3 billion francs (£900 million) for a 51 per cent stake in Banque Indosuez bought from the financial and industrial holding group Compagnie de Suez. Credit Agricole has the option to increase this stake to 80 per cent from July 1, 1997. Suez said it would retain a 20 per cent stake until 2000, after which it could be sold to Credit Agricole. Indosuez was valued at FF11,850 billion on the basis of its 1995 accounts, the companies said.

Harris tweed firm crashes

ONE of the leading makers of Harris tweed has gone into liquidation, with rates arrears of £20,000 and losses of more than £500,000. Lewis and Harris Textiles, based in Stornoway, employed 20 people on Lewis until it ceased commercial operations early this year. An interim liquidator was appointed yesterday. At its peak the company, set up in 1991, was producing 25 per cent of the Harris tweed industry's output. Western Isles council was granted a petition at Stornoway sheriff court in an attempt to recover the rates, according to the liquidator, Ernst and Young.

Brussels beef ban forces Unilever to dump £15m of Birds Eye burgers

charge after the Government said on March 20 that bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) might be linked to a rare and incurable brain disorder in humans, and the European Union banned sales of British beef.

Unilever's Birds Eye subsidiary suspended production of beefburgers at its Lowestoft factory in March and withdrew the products from the trade. But it resumed production in a matter of days, using beef from cows under 30 months of age.

Without the BSE scare, Unilever's profits in the European frozen foods category would have been flat. Overall, the group — whose products range from Persil detergent to Calvin Klein per-

fume and Magnum ice-cream — said net profit rose 3 per cent to £253 million in the first quarter, less than expected. Apart from the BSE scare, it blamed increased tax and interest payments.

The group's European personal products business saw solid volume growth in its mass-market range of goods and top-of-the-range Calvin Klein products. But it was held back by continued difficulties with the Elizabeth Arden personal care business.

Sales of European detergents were low but profits rose because of higher pricing and lower production costs. The company has yet to recover from attacks on its Persil Power detergent, which was found to damage clothes.

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom of the page.

Soccer

Premiership: Leeds Utd 1, Tottenham 3

Anderton lifts Spurs' Euro hopes

Michael Walker

DARREN Anderton, playing his third game since recovering from the injury that has ruined his season, scored two excellent goals that will give Tottenham hope of a place in the UEFA Cup...

score his 22nd goal of the season. Sheringham, comfortably the most accomplished player on view, created the goal that put Tottenham ahead within three minutes later...

Tottenham on the other hand were still contemplating a UEFA Cup place, though they needed three points and a six-goal margin to overtake Arsenal. If not, White Hart Lane could see the Inter-Toto Cup looming again...

With both sides happier to attack than defend more goals seemed inevitable after the interval, and Tottenham deservedly increased their lead in the 66th minute...



Flight of fancy... Peter Beardsley's first-half strike gave Newcastle United early hopes of victory before Ian Woan's spectacular equaliser for Nottingham Forest at the City Ground last night

Fast-recovering Shearer is set to go on England's Far East tour

ALAN SHEARER expects to resume light training today, only two weeks after undergoing a groin operation. The Blackburn striker has made an "excellent recovery"...

Walter Smith has been fined £200 and warned by the Scottish FA about his future conduct because of comments he made after a Premier Division game at Motherwell...

Whyte waits in Scotland's wings

PATRICK Glenn. DEREK WHYTE will spend the weeks between now and Euro '96 wondering whether he will be upgraded from understudy to leading man in the Scotland defence...

departure for the games against the United States in Hartford, Connecticut and Colombia in Miami. If, as hoped, McLaren requires only the straightforward removal of a simple cyst from his cartilage...

because Eoin only played one of the qualifiers, said Brown. He had a hard time with injury and loss of form and missed out quite a bit...

"Don't forget, we have quite a few similar types to Jess, playmakers such as Gary McAllister, Paul McStay, John Collins and Billy McKelvey..."

Wasps swoop for Griffiths

THE drain of Welsh players to English clubs continued yesterday when Wasps signed Mike Griffiths, the Cardiff and Wales prop, on a three-year contract worth about £200,000...

up his job as a brewery sales representative, Rob Smith, Wasps' coach, regards him as a world-class even though he is not a regular first-team choice for Cardiff...

Heineken League: Treorchy 10, Cardiff 31

Cardiff take lead

DAVID Plummer. CARDIFF returned to the top of the First Division with a laboured victory over lowly Treorchy last night and they will need to show more polish and poise in their final two matches...

Instead of building on that lead, Cardiff were constantly penalised by the referee Clayton Thomas and the home side took advantage to steal the lead a minute before half-time when the No. 8 Kevin Jones charged over from a quickly taken penalty...

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE Boston 5 Detroit 1; Cleveland 4 Chicago 2 Toronto 6 Milwaukee 3 Minnesota 6 Kansas City 5 Toronto 6 New York Yankees 2 Tampa Bay 11 Houston 2 Texas 5 Seattle 2 Oakland 2 Atlanta 6 NATIONAL LEAGUE Chicago 9 St Louis 2 New York Mets 2 St. Louis 2 Atlanta 1 Florida 5 Philadelphia 6 Cincinnati 2 Pittsburgh 4 Houston 3 Atlanta 3 San Diego 5 San Francisco 4 LA 1 Colorado 4

Sport in brief

Boxing: Nigel Benn challenges Dublin's Steve Collins for the WBO super-middleweight title at Manchester's 21,000-seat Nynex Arena on Saturday July 6. Thulane "Sugar Boy" Malinga, the South African who outpointed Benn for the WBC title in March, defends it on the same bill against Vincenzo Nardiello of Italy, a loser to Benn and Henry Wharton. Rugby League: South Africa have been promised financial help from the Rugby Football Union, so long as they come up with a viable development plan. Hull have signed the Australian utility back Peter Fitzgerald, who has played rugby union for New South Wales. Equestrianism: David O'Connor on Custom Made held the early lead for the United States after the first half of the dressage tests at the Badminton Horse Trials yesterday, writes John Kerr. Riding his big Irish-bred 11-year-old, winner of the Kentucky three-day event last season, the American, 34 and competing at his third Badminton, is just ahead of two British riders, Lucinda Murray on Just Jeremy II and Helen Bell on Troubleshooter. Table Tennis: JUAN-OVE WALDNER, the Olympic champion thought too old to defend his title successfully in Atlanta, answered his detractors yesterday by saving five matches against the 1993 world champion Jean-Philippe Gatien, writes Richard Jago in Bratislava. The 30-year-old world No. 4 went on to beat the Olympic runner-up 19-21, 21-13, 25-23 to complete Sweden's 4-1 triumph over France, the defending champions, in the European team championship final. Sweden thus recaptured the title they lost in Birmingham two years ago. Waldner and Jorgen Persson, the 1991 world champion, won the doubles and look spritely enough to regain the world title from China in Manchester next year. Earlier two encouraging wins for the 24-year-old Bradley Billington helped England, already relegated from Group One, to a 4-2 victory over Slovenia and 11th place overall. Retirement: The Humberside Hawks have been reincarnated as the Kingston Hawks, writes Vic Batchelder. The Hawks reached the British championship finals at Wembley, going out in the semi-finals the day before their owner, Humberside County Council, disappeared under local government reorganisation. They will play in the equally new British National Ice Hockey League, using the rink previously owned by the old county authority. Tennis: Michael Chang, the holder and top seed, beat Australia's Michael Tebbutt 6-1, 6-3 in just over an hour to reach the quarter-finals of the clay court AT & T Challenge tournament in Atlanta.

Cricket

Table with 3 columns: County, Runs, Wickets. Includes Derbyshire 31, Kent 37, Somerset 43, Durham 32, Leics 38, Surrey 44, Essex 33, Lancs 39, Sussex 45, Glamorgan 34, Middlesex 40, Warwick 46, Gloucestershire 35, Northants 41, Worcesters 47, Hampshire 36, Nottingham 42, Yorkshire 48.

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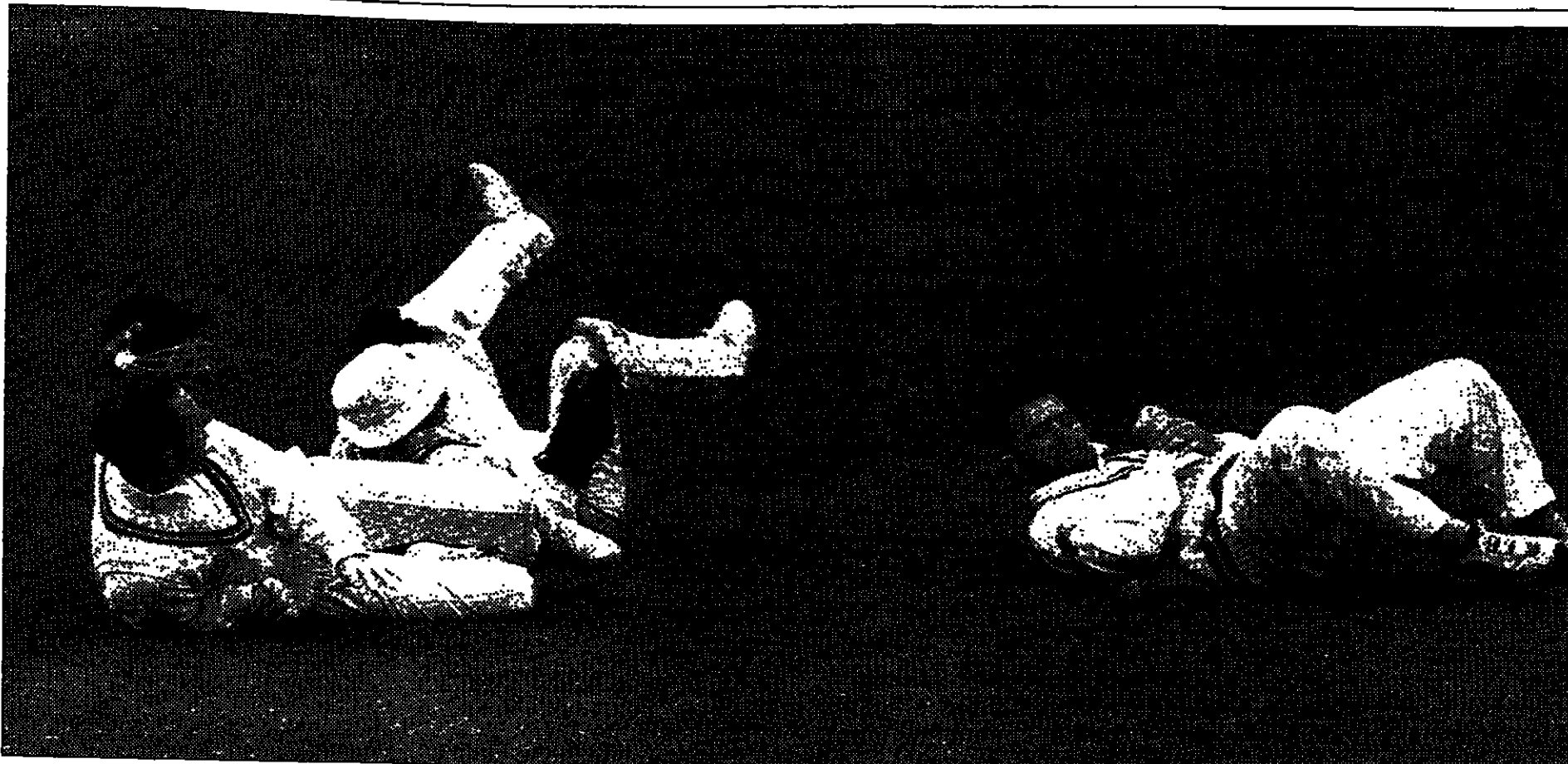
RFU close to a deal with clubs

TONY HALLETT, the secretary of the Rugby Football Union, said last night that Twickenham was on the verge of reaching an agreement with England's leading clubs over the structure for next season and television and players' contracts. Hallett and Bill Bishop, the RFU president, will report to the full RFU committee today on the progress made in their talks with the League One and Two clubs. Four months of increasingly bitter haggling took another turn for the worse this week when Cliff Brittle, chairman of the executive, boycotted a meeting with the leading clubs. But Hallett said: "We will be emphasising what we believe is the making of an important peace accord." Phil Moss has quit as Orrell coach after two years in charge. Andy Macfarlane, the No. 8 who recently joined Orrell from Sale, will be player-coach.

Table Tennis

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All fall down... Gloucestershire's Richard Davis, Jack Russell and Tony Wright combine to drop John Carr off his first ball at chilly Lord's yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

County Championship: Middlesex v Gloucestershire

Brass monkeys escort debs to the ball

Mike Selvey at Lord's
WITH John Embury gone, Dion Nash in the Caribbean, Phil Tufnell and Richard Johnson on the sick list, and so many debutants in the side that it was a wonder the game had not been rescheduled for Berkeley Square, Middlesex looked a team in transition yesterday.

Having been second in the championship last year, pushing Warwickshire to the wire, they are already out of the Benson and Hedges Cup this year, and for the first part of the opening day of their championship campaign it seemed that their confidence might be shattered by Gloucestershire as they were bowled out for 200.

Instead, by the time the teams trooped off when the light finally closed in with seven overs remaining, it was Mike Gatting's side who just held the upper hand, with Gloucestershire 94 for four in reply, although Andrew Symonds, 42, not out from 40 balls, will present a threat to that position this morning.

It was typically early-season cricket, played on a sappy pitch — located within a handshake of the Mound Stand — that helped the seam bowlers throughout the day, and batsmen on both sides found life anything but a bed of spring primroses.

Nor did the weather and general ambience help; although the rain somehow missed St John's Wood, it was so finger-numbingly cold and the banks of empty white seats so Arctic in appearance that when Gatting and Jack Russell reached the middle to toss, it would have been no surprise to find that a Norwe-

gian had beaten them to it and planted a flag on a length. All day, hands left pockets only to bowl or, reluctantly, field, and with hypothermia a worry it is hard to get motivated in such conditions.

Worcestershire v Essex

Frozen points

David Hopps at New Road
CRICKET'S big kick-off — or rather it wasn't. If sport has largely given way to outrageous hype, the start of the championship season is still launched with a vaguely abashed air.

By twenty to two, the waiting was over. Essex's fielders trudged, pinch-featured, on to the outfield to the spirited applause of three elderly spectators wrapped in blankets.

A lone ice-cream van, probably a stray from the Moscow State Circus which has also been in town, remained alongside the scoreboard for the first 13 overs and failed to sell a single item, its driver then retreating without so much as a jingle.

Over at second slip, England's newest selector Graham Gooch briefly considered the form and then dipped his hand into his pocket to pass round a crumpled bag of boiled sweets, some of them doubtless still bearing the fluff from the 1995 season.

A grand old pro is Goochie, a man who knows when to hand round the boiled sweets and when not to. They were safely back in his pocket when Curtis ended 10 overs of surveillance by dabbing him a homely catch off Williams's outwinger.

Somerset v Surrey

Early retirement for Thorpe

David Foot at Taunton
GRAHAM THORPE returned from hospital last night to report that his right forearm was badly bruised but not, as feared, broken. He is willing to bat again for Surrey today if necessary.

Only 11.2 overs were possible after a start late in the afternoon. But it was long enough to be eventful and, from the Somerset bowlers' point of view, encouraging.

Thorpe had immediately creamed a boundary through the covers. Soon afterwards he ducked into a delivery from Andre van Troost and was in a lot of pain.

It was a damp wicket on which neither side would have chosen to bat. Somerset, who won the toss, were with Andy Caddick, being out after some slight reaction to his back problems after a quietly impressive first competitive match of the season earlier in the week at Cardiff.

But their experimental new-ball attack of Kevin Shine and Van Troost was fast and at times awkward. Shine, now at his third county, was patently fired up and once he had found his line he got some bounce — and two wickets.

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Yorkshire openers find record form

Paul Weaver at Canterbury
IT TOOK bad light to end Glamorgan's misery yesterday after Martyn Moxon, who made 150, and Michael Vaughan, whose 156 was a career best, broke a Yorkshire batting record at Cardiff. They reached 316 without loss, beating the previous best opening stand against Glamorgan of 255 scored for seven after the Oxford captain Chinnay Gupta had opted to bowl first.

Robin Smith managed just one scoring stroke — a stranky edge for two off Hasnain Malik — in 15 balls before miscuing a square cut off the left-arm seamer David Mather to Malik at third man.

Laney and his captain John Stephenson (47) gave Hampshire a 91-run start but the off-spinner Mark Wagh broke the stand, bowling Stephenson just before lunch.

Kent v Lancashire

Pinch-hitter Fleming falls victim to Jayasuriya Fever

Paul Weaver at Canterbury
A NUMBER of batsmen are now in danger of contracting Jayasuriya Fever, an affliction once confined to the humidity of Sri Lanka and characterised by hot-headedness, a whirling bat and an inability to recognise either line or length.

Even in damp, cold Canterbury cases are not unknown; Matthew Fleming was the victim yesterday, and by end of the season several more opening batsmen are expected to have perished. The fever is of course named after the Sri Lanka batsman Sanath Jayasuriya, the "pinch-hitter" wicket of the World Cup.

To some extent the notion of opening with a pinch-hitter is a worthy one in all limited-overs cricket, and Fleming was cricketer, and Fleming was cricketer, and Fleming was cricketer.

Motor Racing
Hill still high on confidence
Alan Henry at Imola

Golf
Local hero takes first blood in the duel with Torrance
Michael Britten in Bergamo

Scoreboard

BRITANNIC ASSURANCE
County Championship
First day of year today, 11.0

GLAMORGAN v YORKSHIRE	150
GLAMORGAN	150
YORKSHIRE	156

MIDDLESEX v GLOUCESTERSHIRE
Lord's, Gloucestershire (4) trail Middlesex by 100 runs with six first-innings wickets in hand.

Middlesex	34
Gloucestershire	100

Other match
OXFORD UNIVERSITY v HAMPSHIRE
The Pavilion, Hampshire have scored 254 for seven in their first innings against Oxford University.

Oxford	254
Hampshire	254

Snooker

O'Sullivan lags as Ebdon takes early honours

Clive Everton in Sheffield
PETER EBDON made a break of 109, his sixth century of the tournament, to take a 4-3 overnight lead against Ronnie O'Sullivan in their best-of-31-frames semi-final of the Embassy World Championship here at the Crucible Theatre.

Likewise Ebdon's tense victories over Jimmy White (13-12) and Steve Davis (13-10) had drawn heavily on his inner resources, but he was twice able to raise his game for important clearances yesterday.

Tennis
Petchey tempts the cup fates
Stephen Bierley

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Chairman Chase bows out at Norwich, page 14
Spurs keep Europe hopes alive, page 14

O'Sullivan suffers in early frames, page 15
Yorkshire openers make hay, page 15

SportsGuardian

ENGLAND'S NEW COACH PUTS AN END TO THE AGONY



Flash company... Hoddle and Venables perform before the massed ranks of the press photographers in London yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

Terry Venables's successor passes his first encounter with the press with flying colours. Martin Thorpe reports

Hoddle takes it in his stride

A PHOTOGRAPHER had to ask him to smile, but that could not disguise the fact that Glenn Hoddle was a happy man yesterday afternoon as he was unveiled as England's next coach.

After 48 hours of agonising over whether to leave Chelsea, Hoddle decided to accept the FA's offer on Wednesday night. It had been a heart-rending two days, he said, and "it was the only job I would leave Chelsea for". But leading England was "a privilege and an honour and a

burning ambition since a very young age. It is the pinnacle of any management career and the timing was right".

So Hoddle will take over from Terry Venables on July 1, tied to a four-year contract worth a reputed £250,000 a year. His first priority is to lead England to the 1998 World Cup finals, with the opening qualifier on September 1.

Yesterday's rapid fire of cameras and questions gave him a taste of the other scrutiny to come as he sat flanked by Graham Kelly, the FA's chief executive, and Venables. But the heir apparent handled it all with the air of a man practised in the art of saying something but not a lot. He promised to continue the chessboard soccer which split opinion after the Croatia game, batted away suggestions that at 38 he was too inexperienced, said it was too early to announce his backroom staff and vowed to keep out of Venables's hair during Euro '96. He will not attend England training before that showpiece; neither will he accompany the squad on their Far East tour in three weeks. His immediate tasks include a sentimental farewell to Stamford Bridge at his final Chelsea game on Sunday, choosing his international coaching lieutenants, and scouting teams ahead of those World Cup qualifiers.

Kelly summed up the qualities that had so impressed the FA: "He believes in intelligent players, raising the sophistication levels of English players, and playing the same system through all international levels so players can fit in easily when they are promoted."

Hoddle accepted that a full appreciation of his playing

style would not come easily. "To be appreciated I've got to be successful and play in a manner that's close to my heart and the public's."

"England's last two performances were superb but sometimes I think we admire what happens across the Channel but people raise eyebrows when someone tries to implement it at home. I feel that Terry is on the right lines. I feel that is the correct way to play and that the public will take it on board when we win matches."

When asked about his relative inexperience he sounded worldly-wise. "Sometimes experience is judged by grey hairs, but that is not necessarily right."

As for the media pressure, "at the end of the day I decided it wouldn't be a reason to turn down the job".

But already there is a major rumour in the making. An angry Chelsea chairman Ken Bates thought it bad enough that the FA approached Hoddle on Monday before they spoke to Chelsea. But in fact Kelly revealed yesterday that the FA's technical adviser Jimmy Armfield had actually first spoken to Hoddle "some time ago".

The Chelsea director Matthew Harding felt the loss of Hoddle in a more personal

Premiership: Nottm Forest 1 Newcastle 1

Newcastle title hopes fade after Woan strike

David Lacey

A LEFT-FOOT shot from 25 yards from Ian Woan struck deep at the heart of Newcastle's lingering championship ambitions at the City Ground last night after a masterly goal from Peter Beardsley had given Manchester United's pursuers a half-time lead.

Kevin Keegan's Monday-night rant at Leeds having been embodied in Sky's pre-match hype, his players had to demonstrate that actions spoke even louder than their manager's words. No easy matter.

Tiredness had been in evidence as Newcastle clung to their 1-0 lead at Eiland Road. That had been their fourth win in five games but the strain was showing among their players even before Keegan went off at the deep end about Alex Ferguson's attempts to psyche up Leeds.

Keegan swallowed a bit of pride last night by dropping Asprilla, his £7 million Colombian, who had looked jaded at Leeds. This meant that, with Ginola back from suspension and Gillespie keeping his place, Newcastle regained the balance on the wings so crucial to their initial championship challenge.

Forest kept faith with Sunday's side maulled by Manchester United restored Roy to the centre of their attack, with Woan resuming duties on the left side of midfield. Their early attacks nibbled at the fringes of the Newcastle defence and the visitors needed to raise the pace of the game to break up the relaxed rhythm of Forest's passing.

Asprilla's absence meant that Beardsley was able to retain much closer links with Ferdinand, but for a time Newcastle were denied possession.

After 11 minutes they all but fell behind. Crossley's clearance was headed on by Lee and as it dropped Peacock impeded the advancing Hislop. Roy toe-poked the ball a yard off target.

At Eiland Road, Newcastle had seen Leeds hit bar and post in the opening quarter-hour and had then immediately scored what proved to be the winning goal. Forest, however, were looking less vulnerable than they had ultimately proved to be at Old Trafford.

The service to Ferdinand

looked likely to improve only when Beardsley went deep to receive the ball. Ginola and Gillespie tended to be isolated and inactive. Forest were continuing to command the game.

Beardsley was to change all that. After half-an-hour Ferdinand, released by Lee's quick pass through a defence pushing up, bore down on Crossley but was tackled by Hasland before he could shoot, enabling the goalkeeper to avert the danger. In the next minute, however, Beardsley, collecting a pass from Batty 20 yards inside the Forest half, ran diagonally at the defence, shook his hips, dropped a shoulder, kept them guessing and then beat Hasland on the outside before scoring with a superb left-foot shot.

Then Newcastle were back where they had been at Leeds, leading by one, needing more to narrow the gap on goal difference, but missing chances.

As the first half ended, Watson's quick throw on the right found Beardsley sprinting through the defence to the by-line. The ball was cut back low to set up Ferdinand for a second goal, but he scooped it high over the bar.

The habit continued after half-time. Forest, chasing an equaliser, were more likely to be caught on the break and Ginola had plenty of time and space to float a centre to the far post, where Elliott's diving header lacked the pace to beat Crossley.

Newcastle, nevertheless, were threatening to inundate a Forest defence now beginning to collapse in the familiar fashion. Crossley did not help by meeting a back pass with a wild slice behind for a corner, from which Albert went close.

The 67th minute Ferdinand went even closer. Out-jumping Chettle as he met Elliott's centre from the left, the England striker made good contact with his header, only to see the ball rebound from the bar.

The possible cost of such misses and near-misses soon became apparent and in dramatic fashion. In the 74th minute Woan, exploiting a rare error by Batty, who allowed the ball to slip under his foot, struck his resounding equaliser.

Notes: Peter Beardsley, Hasland, Cooper, Chettle, Pearce, Stone, Gemmill, Bert-Williams, Woan, Roy, Lee, Newcastle: Elliott, Hislop, Watson, Peacock, Albert, Elliott, Gillespie, Lee, Batty, Ginola, Beardsley, Ferdinand. Referee: D. Dixon (Nottingham).

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BARCLAYS

Here, perhaps, we reach a fascinating new chapter in the Archer saga. Always before, the books have rescued him from personal disaster. Now he personally must survive a disaster of a book. Peter Preston

Review page 10

Guardian Crossword No 20,643

Set by Janus

Across

- Horse seller? (7)
- Most profound nuisance on river? (7)
- Is present as one race finishes? (7)
- Beginning of first letter? (7)
- Unreliable green-assistant as a rule? (9)
- Send someone out to former French island? (5)
- Right about Scotsman's being gay? (5)
- Restaurant or pit in state control? (9)
- Tears shed by fashion middleman? (9)
- Paper given back to America as a sweetener? (5)
- King for example taking paper-round? (5)
- Obvious display of irritation from one laying charge? (9)

Down

- Resounding error? (7)
- Aerial-worker picking up girl? (7)
- Something one regards as hopelessly ruined? (5)
- Elastic arousing silent ire? (9)
- Paper-cleaner? (5)
- Prime side's external protection? (9)
- Omission by judge at Jerusalem? (7)
- Highest ordeal involving everybody? (7)
- Bird needing to change notes perhaps? (9)
- Trial meant to overturn will? (9)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,642

- Chap getting first place with vegetable? (7)
- By which scholars may be gradually rewarded? (7)
- Puppet in the grand theatrical tradition? (7)
- Defined to have plug mended? (7)
- Flower it's difficult to set in place? (5)
- Never-failing self-possession? (5)

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